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F. A. Whitney.

SHAKSPEARE
AND
HIS FRIENDS.
OR,
The Golden Age of Merry England

BY THE AUTHOR OF
"THE YOUTH OF SHAKSPEARE."

His life was gentle, and the elements
So mixed in him, that Nature might stand up,
And say to all the world,—"This was a man."
JULIUS CÆSAR.

NEW-YORK:
BURGESS, STRINGER AND COMPANY.
1847.

Williams, Robert Folkestone

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FROM
THE BEQUEST OF
EVERT JANSEN WENDELL
1918

TO

THE ADMIRERS

OF

"Honie-Tong'd Shakspeare,"

AND OF THE OTHER ILLUSTRIOUS SPIRITS OF
THE GOLDEN AGE OF ENGLAND,

THESE VOLUMES,

WITH TRUE HUMBLENESS,

AND ENTIRE DEVOTEDNESS TO THE SUBJECT,

ARE RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED,

BY

THEIR FELLOW-WORSHIPPER,

AND VERY OBEDIENT SERVANT,

THE AUTHOR.

HERE BEGINNETH THE STORY

OF

SHAKSPEARE AND HIS FRIENDS.

CHAPTER I.

With mirth and laughter let old wrinkles come,
And let my liver rather heat with wine
Than my heart cool with mortifying groans.
Why should a man whose blood is warm within
Sit like his grandsire cut in alabaster?
Sleep when he wakes?—and creep into the jaundice
By being peevish? SHAKSPEARE.

—— Soul of the age!
Th' applause, delight,—the wonder of our stage!
My Shakspeare, rise! BEN JONSON.

I PRYTHEE have patience, courteous reader! the whilst I describe a certain chamber well worthy of most minute delineation—as thou wilt see anon—from its having been the retreat, or closet, or place retired from the public eye, in which the master spirit of his age, and the glory of all times to come, did first develop those right famous qualities from which the world hath received such infinite profit and delight. I will not trouble thee with a vain show of phrases architectural, which crabbed antiquarians do much affect; for I am not learned in the mystery of stone and timber; but what true heart and simple skill can do with language, will I essay, to give thee an accurate conception of a place that hath so many admirable recommendations to thy attention.

It was a room of no extraordinary dimensions, yet was it not stinted to space. The ceiling was of a moderate height, and the sides of the chamber were of oak, the panels of which were adorned with a goodly show of delicate tracery, like unto the folds of linen: and round the chimney-piece was a most liberal display of carving, in fruits and foliage. A large vase of living flowers, that filled the chamber with a ravishing sweetness, stood beside the fire-dogs. One broad casement, composed of many little panes let into pieces of lead, looked out upon the river, and the centre part of it being open like a door, at divers times might be heard the mellow "ye, ho!" of the bargeman working his oar, as he piloted his heavy craft toward the city wharves; or, mayhap, softened in the distance, the burden of a popular ballad, sung by a party of merry apprentices going a pleasuring on the water. At one end of the room there rested on the oak floor a large heavy press of dark walnut-tree wood, ornamented with rude carvings of Adam and Eve, and the tree of knowledge; and opposite stood an ancient bookcase, the shelves of which supported a number of famous black-letter volumes, folios and others, cased in parchment or roan bindings. On several narrow, high-backed chairs, of carved oak, might be seen different articles of apparel—a hat on one, a cloak on another, and mayhap, a rapier resting against a third. In one corner were sundry swords and a matchlock; in another, divers pieces of old armor. An empty tankard, and the remains of the morning repast, stood upon a large table in the centre of the chamber; and near the window, before a smaller table covered with papers, and in an antique arm-chair, sat its illustrious occupant.

Although his hose were ungartered, and his doublet had been left unbraced, his right noble countenance and worship-

ful bearing left not the spectator opportunity to notice the negligence of his attire. His face, which was of a manly age—two years short of thirty—had been most providentially fashioned,—with a forehead of marvellous capacity—eyes mild, yet lively withal—a mouth impressed with a very amatory eloquence—and a beard of a perfect gravity. Nor were his limbs of a less favorable mould. In fact, he was a man of multitudinous good graces. I would there were more such. Many such there never can be, for admirable as he was in person, he was still more estimable in mind; and the union of these excellences in a like liberal proportion is of such rarity, that peradventure the example will last out the world.

I am but a sorry limner; but had I the art of Master Holbein, of famous memory, I could not hope, in a portrait, to do him justice; nevertheless, as what the original hath done hath been so singularly well liked, I despair not that posterity will give him proper countenance. However, suffice it to say, he sat writing with a creditable diligence; ever and anon leaning against his seat, abstractedly as it were; and when he had sufficiently pondered on the matter with which he was in progress, his pen resumed its path along the paper with additional speed. Sometimes he would smile as he wrote, as if tickled with the creations of his own fancy; and once his humor seemed so touched with some palpable conceit, that he cast down the pen, and throwing himself back in his chair, did laugh right heartily. At other times, when he appeared to have written passages of a graver purport, which gave him more than passable satisfaction, he took the paper in his hand, and did read aloud, with a rich voice and a most felicitous expression; and of a verity, never was the air so filled with delectable thoughts. At this time there was heard a knocking at the door. "Come in!" exclaimed he; and thereupon entered one apparelled like a young gallant, with hat and feather of a goodly fashion, a delicate satin doublet, an excellent fine ruff, a cloak worn daintily on the shoulder, and a long rapier fastened to his side: trunks pretty [illegible] and embroidered, with silk hose and ruffled boots.

"Ah, Dick!" said he in the chair, laughingly, as he recognised the good-humored features of his visiter, and scrutinising his attire as he closed the door and was advancing into the room, "I'faith thou lookest as fine as a snake that hath just cast its skin; and," added he, with more emphasis, "art as useful to any good purpose I'll be bound."

"Will! Will! thou hast a most malignant wit!" cried the other, as he approached his friend with mock gravity, and shook him earnestly by the hand. "But what thinkest thou of these braveries?" said he, standing as upright as he might, spreading out his cloak, and readjusting his hat. "I fancied that we, the queen's majesty's poor players, ought to dress as becomes the queen's majesty, and therefore have I robed myself anew. What thinkest thou of the cock of this hat? 'Tis in admirable conceit, is it not?—and the feather—doth it not hang marvellously well? Doth not this cloak become me infinitely? and the slashing of this doublet, is it not of the most superlative fashion?"

"In truth, Dick," remarked his companion, drily, as he pushed back his chair to take a better view of his visiter, "I've seen many a jackdaw cut a finer figure?"

"A plague on thy pestilent jests!" exclaimed the other with assumed indignation.

"But as thou askest for my opinion," he resumed, "I will tell thee. Didst thou wish to attire thyself as becometh the queen's majesty, thou shouldst have had recourse to the queen's majesty's wardrobe: for in honest truth, Dick, I do not think thy present dress would become that illustrious princess in the smallest degree"——

"Oh thou pernicious varlet!"

"As for the cock of thy hat, 'tis certainly in admirable conceit, or rather, the conceit is in it, for thy head is in it; and I do not flatter thee when I say there is no lack of conceit there."

"Perdition seize thy wit!"

"Thy feather doth hang marvellously well—i'faith I doubt much if thou wouldst hang better thyself."

"Enough, enough, Will," eagerly exclaimed his associate, putting his hands together, as if begging for mercy; "if thou hast any bowels of compassion, spare me."

"And if thou wert half as well slashed as thy doublet," continued his friend, inattentive to his remonstrance, "I think thou wouldst be in a much more superlative fashion than thou art now."

"O'my word, Will," said the other, laughing, as he took off his hat and flung himself into a chair, "thou art all points, like a hedgehog, or like the naughty girl

in the story-book, out of thy mouth there cometh nothing but venemous things."

"But what mercer art thou attempting to ruin?" inquired his companion.

"A fig for the mercer—'tis the mercer's daughter I seek!" replied his guest.

"Attempt to ruin a mercer's daughter!" exclaimed the other, half starting from his chair with affected surprise. "Fie on thee, for a reprobate! thou art enough to corrupt us all; thou'l wilt have the whole city up in arms against us, and we shall be obliged to fly from the Bankside to escape the stocks."

"I meant not that, Will—I am a heathen if I meant that; but thou knowest my failing—I am always after the women. Oh, those exquisite, sweet creatures!"

"Thou shouldst have more ambition, Dick; precedency is man's natural right in such instances, but if thou art always after the women, thou canst never hope to get before them."

"Thou hast me again," cried his companion, as he threw himself back in his seat to give vent to his laughter; "I would as soon attempt to parry jests with thee as to eat thistles with a jackass; so take thy fill, and be hanged to thee. But I tell thee how it is, Will: This mercer's daughter is said to be the richest heiress in the city. I saw her at the Bear garden with the old bunks her father, whom she ruleth most filially; and observing that she had an eye like Venus"——

"Only one, Dick?" inquired his companion, innocently.

"Two, or I'm a sinner," replied he—"and a bust like Juno; ay, and every grace that all Olympus possessed. In brief, a beauty of such ravishing perfections, that immediately I found her gaze upon me, I felt as many of Cupid's arrows in my heart as there are pins in her huswife, and thereupon fell most continently in love."

"With her father's strong box, Dick?" asked the other.

"With her own sweet self, thou aggravating varlet. I presently made up to the father, and did enter into very sober discourse, till I found I had got hold of the daughter's ear, and then I pointed out the persons of distinction in the company, and seasoned my conversation with some delicate compliments, all which she did receive in very good fashion, rewarding me with such looks from her soft hazel eyes as warmed my veins like a stoup of canary. The old fellow courteously invited me to his house, and the dear wench did repeat some most enticing words, which sent me to the mercer's in a presently. To please him, I ordered these fallals, and to please her; I wear them. I met her by appointment since then in Paul's Walk, and after that she gave me some delicious interviews alone in her father's dwelling, of which I made right profitable use. I tell thee, she is ready to melt in my arms."

"A wax doll would do the same, Dick," drily remarked the other, "if thou wert warm enough."

"Away with thy pestilent similes!" exclaimed his guest, starting up from his seat, as if in anger; then, resuming his place, continued: "She showed me yesterday a sonnet, or some other pernicious mischief of the kind, which had been written in commendation of her beauty—perhaps by some crazy engrosser of parchments. The plague of bad clients be upon him!—and asked me to try what I could do in that way. Now, unless I can produce some such verses—my malediction rest upon Apollo and all his generation!—I feel assured I may spare myself the trouble of venturing within the precincts of her tenement. Thou knowest I could as soon fly as rhyme. I have scratched my head till it ached, and looked up to the ceiling till my neck was as stiff as my ruff; but if ever I succeeded in making reason of my rhyme, or rhyme of my reason, I'm worse than a Jew. So I tell thee what, sweet Will, thou shalt help me in this strait with thine own unparalleled talents, and if I be not grateful, call me a dog."

"Dog, quotha!" cried the other, in seeming amazement; "art thou not the veriest dog that howls o' nights? What a face hast thou, thou impudent varlet, after having, with thy miserable breath, cursed Apollo and all his generation, to come, cap in hand, to one of the humblest of his followers! Go to, I'll ha' none o' thee! I abandon thee to the fury of the immortal gods."

"Nay, but, sweet Will."

"Ay, 'sweet Will' thou callest me now; yet a moment since I was likened to a jackass eating thistles. Hast thou no shame? Dost think, because thine own wretched hack will not stir a foot, that thou shalt ride on my Pegasus? I'm an oyster if I let thee."

"What! not assist thy old friend and comrade?" asked the other, in the same bantering tone he had used from the first; "how often have I done thee a good turn that way? Dost remember, in merry

Stratford, when we were both boys, yet with an intolerant inclination for the honors of manhood, how often I did lead Sir Thomas Lucy's gamekeeper in search of imaginary deer-stealers, whilst thou wert courting his niece in the shrubbery?"

"Ha! ha! thou hast me there, Dick," replied his friend, unable to refrain from laughing at the odd associations which came crowding to his memory; "thou hast me there of a surety. Ah, Kate! she was a delectable little gipsey, with a most enticing ankle, and a smile that would thaw a six weeks' frost. But dost forget thine own tricks, old memorandum? Hast forgot when thou wert laying siege to Barbara, the sexton's pretty daughter, behind the church, how I, with a sheet I had stolen for the nonce, and a turnip-lantern and candle, did stalk through the churchyard, to keep the folks from disturbing thee—to the horror of the whole neighborhood, and the near frightening to death of three ancient spinsters, two drunken ploughboys, and the parish constable?"

"Ha! ha! ha!" shouted the other, with an obstreperous fit of mirth, "'tis as true as life; I'm nothing better than a Turk, if every word isn't gospel. But," added he, gravely, "who could imagine Master William Shakspeare playing the ghost in a country churchyard?"

"Or Master Richard Burbage playing the lover to a sexton's daughter?"

And thereupon the two worthies did laugh till the tears ran down their cheeks, and for some time every word they added seemed to act as a provocative to their mirth.

"I'faith, after all's said and done," observed Master Shakspeare, when he had recovered his gravity, "'twas most exquisite fooling."

"I'faith it was," said Master Burbage. "But thou wilt let me have the verses?" he added, as he sauntered up to the table.

"Ay, marry will I, for old acquaintance sake," replied his friend, and immediately did search among his papers, from which he presently selected one. Scrutinizing it earnestly, he continued—"Ha! here is a string of idle rhymes that may-hap may suit thy purpose, and thy mercer's daughter also. I think of it indifferently; nay, I will acknowledge I fancy 'tis rather discreditable to me; but each has his own taste, and therefore it may stand a chance of pleasing thy inamorata. Listen, and I will read it to thee."

Master Burbage did lean his elbow on the table, having his body bent forward, and supporting his head with his hand; and kept a profound attention whilst Master Shakspeare read the following lines:—

"The Time hath passed for godlike forms
To leave awhile their starry homes,
And throw, 'mid human clouds and storms,
Elysian joy on mortal domes.
The Time hath passed when Phœbus flung
His golden spells on laughing earth;
And ev'ry field and forest rung
With hymns of bliss, and shouts of mirth.
Chaste Dian's starry voice is mute,
The Sea Nymphs dance not on the shore;
Silent is now the Dryad's flute,
And Pan's sweet reed is heard no more.
E'en Love hath folded up his wings,
And from his hand his bow hath cast;
Apollo's lyre hath lost its strings,
Its tune hath fled—THE TIME HATH PASSED!

"Gone are the glorious visitants
Who gave this world so bright a grace,
And Grief and Care—a thousand wants,
And endless crimes, are in their place;
Unhonored is the poet's lay
That once made all Olympus glad;
And Worth is left to beg its way,
Or perish with the mean and bad.
And I, who strove with heart and mind,
That famished souls might break their fast,
Discover now that Heaven is blind.
The world is dead—THE TIME HATH PASSED!

"Oh, no, the Time's restored again,
And with it all its gladdening shapes,
The whilst, from off the breast and brain,
The cloud in which they lay, escapes.
Phœbus in thy bright shape returns.
Thy word's chaste Dian's voice enslave,
For thee the Sea Nymphs' crystal urns,
When in the bath thy limbs must lave.
Love in thine eyes hath ta'en new ground,
And keeps his sharp artillery there;
The breeze Apollo's strings hath found,
And stirs them in thy golden hair;
And as for Pan's Arcadian reed,
Tuned with the Dryads' measured trips,
What blissful melodies exceed
The music breathing from thy lips?
Well cared for is the green earth still,
When round thee all Olympus glows;
Well honored is the poet's skill,
When worth like thine its praise bestows.
Then blessings be upon thy path,
And joy that no ill breath can blast
Be with thee—now the world's poor wrath
Can harm me not—THE TIME HATH PASSED!"

"Excellent good, i'faith!" exclaimed Master Burbage, delightedly. "Excellent good! If she be not satisfied with it, nothing less than another Iliad will gratify her cormorant fancy. Give me the paper, sweet Will! Dan Homer was a blind ballad-monger to thee, thou prince of rhymers."

"Avaunt, thou horrid flatterer!" cried Master Shakspeare, as he allowed his companion to conceal the verses in his purse. "But 'tis poor fishing with other folks' tackle, Dick," he added, in his own facetious way.

"Faith, I care not an' I have good sport: and I'll pay thee for thy tackle with a loose fish or two," replied the other, with a chuckle of inward satisfaction.

"I'll ha' none o' thy gudgeons," said his friend, with mock disdain. "When I fish I catch whales."

"Then hast thou a very blubberly taste," rejoined Master Burbage, "and when I want salve for a wound I'll come to thee; for thou must have a most infinite stock of spermaceti."

Thus they proceeded, bantering and laughing at one another, and indulging their humors with perfect satisfaction to themselves, when a knock was heard at the door, and admittance being granted, there entered a man of a pleasant aspect, and of spare figure, not so gayly garmented as Master Burbage, yet having much of the outward appearance of respectability.

"Welcome, good Lazarus Fletcher. Welcome!" cried Master Shakspeare.

"Hail to thee, Lazarus!" added Master Burbage, in his usual jocose manner. "Hast thou come to the rich man's table, Lazarus? Look for the crumbs, man! Look for the crumbs! and thou art not like to get anything else; for the table hath nothing better than a bare trencher and an empty tankard. Catch the crumbs that hath fallen then, for, in truth, thou lookest wofully like a right hungry Lazarus."

"If I look as hungry as Lazarus, thou lookest as fine as Dives," retorted Master Fletcher.

"What, be there no dogs to lick this Lazarus, that he seemeth so woundily sore?" said the other. "But I tell thee what, Lazarus, an' thou ever liest in Abraham's bosom, thou hadst best tuck up thine ankles, for thou must needs find there a plentiful lack of bed-room."

"Mind not the reprobate, worthy Fletcher," observed Master Shakspeare—yet unable to refrain from laughing.

"Marry, why should I mind him," replied the other, "he only showeth that he hath a spice of the ability of Samson: for he maketh a goodly use of the jawbone of an ass."

"Ha, ha!" shouted Master Shakspeare, chafing his hands in the intensity of his delight. "Spare him not, good Lazarus: an' thou loveth me, spare him not." Then looking toward his friend, he added, "I'faith, Dick, thou hast found thy match."

"Match!" exclaimed Master Burbage, turning sharp round from the casement out of which he had that moment been leaning, "ay, marry! and like other matches—all the good lieth in the brimstone. But tell us thy news, Master Fletcher; for that there is something in the book is evident in the index—thou lookest as important as a tailor's wife threading her husband's needle."

"O' my troth, I have something worth the telling," replied he.

"Disburthen thyself then, and quickly, good Lazarus," observed Master Shakspeare.

"There hath a message come from the master of the Revels, worthy Master Edmond Tilney," said Master Fletcher, "to the intent that it be the design of the queen's majesty, with divers of her honorable court, to honor her poor players with a visit; and leaving Hemings and Condell and the rest to prepare for her reception, I posted off here, as Master Burbage had left word that he would be found at Master Shakspeare's lodgings."

"Hurrah!" shouted Master Burbage, snatching up his hat and waving it over his head, "we'll have a right worshipful audience. Heaven preserve her majesty, and enrich her servants, say I. Come along, good Lazarus!" he added, as he caught his brother actor by the arm, "we must to the playhouse."

"I will be with thee anon, Dick," said Master Shakspeare, as his visiters were proceeding to the door. "But I have a letter to write to my Lord Southampton, to thank him for yonder exquisite present of flowers he hath sent me from his own garden, and to acquaint him with our proceedings with the court of aldermen, touching our threatened liberties, at the Blackfriars."

"Success attend thee, Will, in all thy doings," exclaimed his friend, and putting on his hat he led his companion out of the chamber.

Master Shakspeare being left alone, did presently draw up his chair closer to the table on which he had been writing, and did recommence his labors with an admirable diligence. Mayhap he was engaged in the inditing of one of those right famous plays which did bring so much honor to his name; but know I not this for a surety; and as a trusty chronicler, I will only subscribe to that of which I have a perfect knowledge. However, it be certain that he had not been long so engaged, when a third knock was heard at the door, so gentle it was scarcely audible; and although he seemed at first somewhat impatient of interruption (for no man liketh to be much disturbed in his privacy), when, upon his giving permission to the person to enter, he observed his visiter, he gave him most cour-

teous welcome. He was a youth, aged seventeen, or thereabouts, tall, slim, and elegant, and though clad in homely russet, there was that in his graceful carriage, and in his mild yet thoughtful countenance, that did signify something of a far higher quality than such poor apparel did denote. But most remarkable was the exceeding modesty of his deportment. He opened and closed the door almost tremblingly, and respectfully taking off his hat, advanced into the room with downcast eyes, to the great marvel of our illustrious poet.

"I took the boldness, Master Shakspeare," said the youth falteringly, as he kept smoothing his hat with his hand where he stood in the middle of the chamber—"I took the boldness some time since to send you a tragedy of my poor contrivance; hoping, from what I had heard of your worthy disposition, that you would honor that humble attempt to such an extent as to give it your perusal; and peradventure if such an obscure individual be not thought altogether unworthy of attention from one so excellently gifted as yourself, you will favor me so far as to grant me your opinion of its matter and management."

"That will I, worthy sir, without fail," replied Master Shakspeare, regarding his young visiter with a more than ordinary interest. "But you must first acquaint me with your name, and the title of the play you intrusted to my custody; for my reputation, however little deserved it may be, and my influence at the playhouse, which is thought to be greater than it is, are the causes of my being continually applied to for a similar purpose."

"The tragedy was called 'Hero Leander,' and I signed my name 'Francis,'" murmured the youth.

"Let me beg of you to be seated, worthy Master Francis," exclaimed the other, as he hastily handed him a chair. "I remember it well," he added, as he searched among his papers on the table, "by the token that it did contain many passages that exhibited no mean ability."

The melancholy aspect of the young stranger did brighten up marvellously at the hearing of this commendation, and his eyes looked abundance of thanks. He argued the most favorable conclusion from so promising a commencement, for it is the nature of youth to be sanguine upon very little occasion.

"I have it," said Master Shakspeare, as he laid hold of the manuscript; and, opening it, sat himself down in the chair, as if to give it a careful examination: then added, "but in all honesty, I must acknowledge that it hath a total unfitness for representation." At this the youth's countenance became blanched with a sudden paleness. "It hath a lack of everything which is most necessary for a drama to have: to wit, action—interest—and character;—the which, if it have not, were it written by King Solomon himself, or the seven wise masters in conjunction, it would have no chance with our modern audiences. The time of mysteries and moralities hath gone by. People now will not listen to dialogues without an object, and plays without a plot. David hath ceased to abuse Goliath in a set speech an hour long, and Joseph lingereth no longer to preach a thrice tedious sermon to Potiphar's wife. If a play have not action it must needs have but little interest; for although something may occasionally be done in a narrative form, if the ball be not kept up—that is to say, if the *dramatis personæ* be doing of nothing—even if the sentences be proverbs of wisdom, then shall the play be a bad play. Again, if the characters who form the plot have no individuality or distinct features, in accordance with nature or probability, though they look like Alexanders and argue like Aristotles, shall the play be a bad play. Your tragedy, Master Francis, hath these particular defects, and I should be hugely deficient in candor, and in no way deserving the confidence you have been pleased to place in me, were I to refrain from telling you that it can not be acted with any profit either to yourself or others. There is another objection to it—the subject hath already been done by Kit Marlowe."

Master Shakspeare observing for the first time that the lips of his visiter had lost their accustomed ruddiness, and that he did look most despairing and wo-begone, with that sweet sympathy which maketh the generous so fearful of giving pain to another, instantly began to turn over the leaves of Master Francis his play, and resumed his discourse. "But let me not cause you to imagine that I think naught of your tragedy, Master Francis. Far be it from me to say so. I do consider the blank verse very musical and eloquent, and full of right admirable conceits. Here is a passage in which a lover, expostulating with his mistress, who doth affect inconstancy in no small measure, sayeth this much as argument to prove the unity of love:—

"'Effect and cause—(the lover and the loved)
Are consequence and origin of one
Pure, single, and connective property—
The proud desire of human happiness:
Which leads one spirit to another one,
One heart unto its fellow. This is love,
Which, with an inclination natural,
And fond and sweet, and generous and good,
Ever inclineth one sex to the other
To realize a mutual bliss. The two,
In pairs, from other pairs apart, are joined
In bonds of budding hopes and blushing joys;
The whilst the Social Virtues hand in hand,
Linked like the golden rings that form a chain
Of precious, priceless worth, circle them round,
And keep off from the temple of their bliss,
Unholy thoughts, false gods, and evil deeds.'

"And again, in continuation of the same subject:—

"'The forest tops
Give voices to the wind, and there the dove
Sits with her mate secure—with heart all joy—
In inclination uncorrupt—in dreams
That are reality: and still her breast
With passionate ecstacy heaves tremblingly;
There is a stirring gladness in her eyes;
There is a thrilling music in her voice;
For she doth own a blessed tranquillity.
No other winged one can seek that nest:
They find a perfect pleasure in themselves;
Their lives are for each other; and unknown
Beyond the little sanctuary of their loves.
Is any rapture which they there enjoy.

"'If Nature then declare her law to be
That one alone should unto one be fixed
In sacred love and pure devotedness,
Shall human kind, of loving things the best,
The noblest, wisest, and the most divine,
Give that in partnership to more than one
Which one alone can know in purity?
Divide this precious influence—'tis lost.
The moment that in other hands 'tis placed
Gone is the golden virtue it possessed.
The sage's wisdom is his own—the wand
Of the magician doth forget its charm
With one who hath no magic—strike the harp
A moment since so eloquent with song
Raised by the Poet's skill, and nothing speaks
But what is dull, and harsh, and dissonant.
And why is this?—Because in natural things,
There is an ownership: and Love, of all
Our natural gifts most natural,
Admits of no division of its worth.
We can not set one gem in many rings.'

"I do opine, Master Francis," continued our illustrious dramatist, with a look of kindness toward his young companion, who had been listening with delighted attention to Master Shakspeare's faultless delivery of his lines—"I do opine that there is much admirable matter in these words; and the same opinion holds good toward other passages in your play, of similar excellence; which plainly prove to me that there is no lack of promise in you. But be not too hasty; pluck not the fruit before it be ripe, else they who may chance to taste it will make wry mouths. If you would take the advice of one willing to do you all manner of good offices"—

"If I do not, I should be the most unworthy varlet that lives," exclaimed Master Francis warmly.

"You will wait awhile before you offer any composition to the public eye," said Master Shakspeare, affecting not to notice the interruption he had received, yet being much pleased thereat.—"You are young—your knowledge of the world must, therefore, be scanty; and although I do perceive in your writings a comprehensive acquaintance with books, he who writeth tragedies should possess an equal knowledge of men; therefore I do advise you, for some years to come, to study mankind, if you entertain any desire of taking your stand among our English dramatists. Moreover, you have as yet acquired no information as to the business of the stage—a matter of vast moment toward the success of even the best play. This you can only inform yourself of by noting what others have done. The most effective way for you to do this is to come to us at the playhouse, where you shall have free ingress and egress upon every fitting occasion: and I will forward your interest in all that my poor skill or influence can effect."

The tone of kindness with which these last sentences were delivered, seemed to have a most powerful effect upon the listener; indeed it had gone direct to his heart, and he sat for some seconds perfectly unable to utter a syllable.

"Is there anything more I can do for you?" inquired Master Shakspeare, regarding the changing color and modest demeanor of his visiter with increasing interest. "Though I seek not to make a boast of it, I have some powerful friends, to whom, peradventure, my recommendation would do good service, if ventured in behalf of one of your excellent parts and disposition."

"Oh, Master Shakspeare!" murmured the youth, looking up to him with eyes made humid by his grateful emotions, "I would I had language to thank you; but my heart is too full."

"Nay, nay, worthy Master Francis," said the other, encouragingly, "if you love me you must not think of that. He who looks for thanks deserveth them not. Such a one am not I. I will acknowledge I feel a regard for you, and would wish to be your friend: and if you will intrust me with your confidence, rest assured it shall not be abused. Tell me, is your way of life agreeable to you?"

"Indeed it is not," replied his visiter, with a melancholy expression of countenance that completely attested the truth of the avowal. "But why should I take advantage of the goodness of your dispo-

sition? or why trouble you with my complaints? I have already taken up too much of your valuable time?" Then he added, as he rose from his chair to depart, "I thank you very heartily for your kindness, which, in all times to come, shall be the most delightful of my remembrances; and if it please you to give me my papers, I would gratefully take my leave."

"We part not thus," said Master Shakspeare, quickly, as he rose from his seat, and taking hold of Master Francis his shoulder, did affectionately push him back into his chair; then sitting carelessly on the edge of the table adjoining, with one hand of his visiter kindly pressed in his own, and with a most benevolently smiling countenance he proceeded. "We part not thus. Sit you down, Master Francis—sit you down: and let not the modesty of your disposition be a stumbling-block to the advancement of your fortunes. The world hath not used you well, or I mistake countenances hugely. Let me try to make amends for the unkindness of others. I have both the inclination and the power to serve; and it seemeth to me that I should do myself credit by any service I could render. Let me be your friend, Master Francis. I assure you, on the honor of a Christian gentleman, and an humble follower of the Muses, that you will do me a great wrong if you allow me not the satisfaction of befriending you."

"Indeed, Master Shakspeare, you are too good," exclaimed his visiter, warmly returning the pressure of the hand he had received. "I know not what to say—I lack words—I am quite overpowered."

"What a wittol am I, and one shamefully neglectful of the duties of hospitality!" said Master Shakspeare, suddenly, as he sprung from the table and, proceeding to a cupboard in a recess of the chamber, did presently return, bringing a flask and two drinking-horns.

"I would you would excuse me, worthy Master Shakspeare," said the youth, modestly, as soon as he observed the movement of his host.

"Excuse me no excuses," replied the other, with a smile, as he made room on the little table, and poured out the wine into the vessels. "What! shall it be said that Will Shakspeare denied a brother poet a draught of the fountain from which he hath so often drawn inspiration? Tell it not at the Mermaid. A cup of this excellent sherris will warm both our hearts."

"You have made my heart warm enough as it is," observed Master Francis, still hesitating to take the proffered cup.

"Tush, man!" replied Master Shakspeare, hospitably forcing the cup into his guest's almost reluctant hand, will you not drink to my health?"

"Ah, that will I, with all true earnestness," exclaimed the other, as he immediately raised the wine to his lips.

"And I most heartily wish, as all England must wish, that your life be long preserved to delight and enrich this island with your right excellent labors."

"Thank you, worthy Master Francis, thank you," said his host, shaking his companion cordially by the hand: "it is gratifying to be praised at all, but to be praised by those who can appreciate, is the most exquisite of flattery. And now let me pledge you to our better acquaintance," added he, as he poured out a brimming cup for himself, "and may success attend you equal to your deserts—which be of no common order."

"You are too liberal in your commendation—indeed you are," observed the youth, as a slight blush appeared upon his countenance.

"Not a whit, man, not a whit," replied his host, as he finished his draught. "There can be no harm in praising a modest man; for if the desert be not equal to the praise, he will not rest till he make it so. But your cup is empty."

"Nay, good Master Shakspeare," exclaimed the other, as he noticed his host refilling the cup—"if it please you, no more."

"But it does not please me, Master Francis," said his companion, jocosely.

"I am not used to drinking of wine of a morning, and it may chance get in my head."

"No vessel can be the worse for containing good wine, Master Francis. So you must e'en drink another cup."

"I thank you, but I would rather not," said Master Francis, falteringly, as the vessel was handed to him.

"What, hesitate to drink the queen's health?" exclaimed Master Shakspeare in seeming astonishment. "Why, how now? Surely loyalty hath gone out of the land, if the guest of one of her majesty's poor players refuse to join him in drinking the health of Queen Elizabeth."

"I thought not of that," remarked the other, quietly taking the wine, "I will join you gladly." Thereupon, with much sincerity of heart, these two did drink to

the queen's majesty. "But I must be going, or my uncle will be angered with me; and he is a man of a most ungracious humor," said Master Francis.

"A murrain on him!" cried Master Shakspeare. "And, if I may make so free as to ask, who is he?"

"He is Gregory Vellum, the scrivener, of St. Mary Axe," replied the youth; "and though report say that he abounds in riches, one would suppose that he hath not sufficient to furnish a beggar's wallet."

"Have you no father living?" asked his host.

"It is uncertain," responded Master Francis more seriously. "My mother's was a private marriage with a gentleman much above her in station, and as he said it would injure him in the estimation of his family if his union became known, she kept his quality a secret from all who knew her. He went to the wars a short time before she gave birth to me, and has never since been heard of; and my poor mother died in childbed, without leaving any other memorial of her husband than this miniature, which I always carry about with me."

Master Shakspeare silently examined the trinket, which was in a gold frame, that the youth wore round his neck. On one side was the likeness of a very lovely woman; the other had contained another miniature, mayhap, of a cavalier; but it was now empty.

"The initials E. V., on one side the frame, are for my mother Eleanor Vellum," continued the youth, "and the F. H., on the empty frame, are doubtless the initials of my father; of which one must be Francis, for so she always called him, as I have heard, and therefore by that name have I been christened; but what the other standeth for I know not, and perchance may never know till the day of judgment."

"Be of good heart, Master Francis," said his companion, encouragingly, "peradventure the secret may be discovered sooner than you look for. But what says your uncle?—knoweth he nothing?"

"Sometimes I am apt to think that he knows more than he is inclined to tell," replied Master Francis; "for in his unguarded moments, he hath dropped some mysterious hints which savor a little of the purpose. But he is so continually upbraiding me for the troubles and the charges I put him to—he so stints me in all sorts of necessaries, and so begrudges me the little pleasure I enjoy—that he hath made my life a daily burthen, and I should be right glad to get from under his roof, to labor in any capacity for which I may be properly qualified."

"That shall not be long first, or my name be not Will Shakspeare," exclaimed his host, as he poured out another cup of wine for his guest.

"Nay, good Master Shakspeare," cried the youth, rising up and taking his hat, as he noticed the brimming vessel proceeding toward him, "prythee let me go; I have drunk most bountifully, I thank you."

"One more cup, and it shall be the last."

"Indeed I would rather not."

"Now, look at this!" exclaimed Master Shakspeare, in apparent wonder. "Here is a youth of some eighteen years or so, who confesses that he hath met with no fair damsel with soul-enkindling eyes and roseate cheeks, whose health he deems worthy of being drunk in a bumper of sherris."

"I said not that, Master Shakspeare," replied his young companion, hastily, as the color mounted to his cheek—"Believe me, I said not that."

"I believe you most heartily," said his host with a laugh, as he noticed the youth's increasing confusion. "I see conviction in your complexion. Her health, Master Francis."

"Well, I suppose I must," observed his guest, as if anxious to be quickly relieved from his embarrassment. "I thank you kindly. She is a right noble creature, and I should be the basest wretch alive were I to refuse to drink her health —considering——" Here the young poet stopped suddenly; his complexion acquired a warmer glow; and a shadow of deep melancholy overspread his features."

"Hath she no name, Master Francis?" inquired the other earnestly, and, if the truth must be told, somewhat mischievously.

"Indeed she hath," he replied. "It is a good name—a name of excellent credit —a——"

"I doubt it not," observed Master Shakspeare, with more than his usual gravity; "but to the point, man. Dost hesitate to tell it? Take my word for it, you are paying her no compliment if you do."

"Her name is Joanna," said the youth in a voice scarcely audible, and trying unsuccessfully to hide his confusion.

"Then drink I your Joanna's health in

a brimming cup, and with a most heartfelt wish that she may be worthy of you, and that you may be happy with her."

Master Francis said nothing, but hastened to drink the wine that had been placed in his hand.

"And now, Master Francis, here is your tragedy," said his companion, as he gave him the manuscript, with a benevolent countenance and a cordial shake of the hand; "and henceforth consider me your friend, for I wish to prove myself such. Something shall be done for you, rest assured, and that very shortly. Good day, Master Francis, good day," he continued, as he kindly led his visiter to the door, and opened it for him.

Master Francis could only look his thanks, and then threading the narrow staircase of the house, made the best of his way to St. Mary Axe.

CHAPTER II.

My heart allows
No gums, nor amber, but pure vows;
There's fire at breathing of your name,
And do not fear—
I have a tear
Of joy to curb any immodest flame.
SHIRLEY.

Oh, Sir, the wonder!
A beauty ripe as harvest,
Whose skin is whiter than a swan all over,
Than silver, snow, or lilies! A soft lip
Would tempt you to eternity of kissing,
And flesh that melteth in the touch to blood;
Bright as your gold, and lovely as your gold.
BEN JONSON.

"FRANCIS! FRANCIS!" screamed out a little old man, meanly apparelled, as he stumped about with his stick in a gloomy room, that appeared from its deficiency in all furniture, save a desk with a tall stool, and several papers and parchments tied up and placed on shelves about the fireplace, that it was an office. "Francis! Francis, I say! A murrain on thee for a lazy varlet! thou art sure to give me the slip as soon as my back is turned. Francis!" he shouted again, and then muttered to himself, "a wasteful, idle, good-for-naught, that be always consuming my substance or misspending my time; I would I were well rid of him. Francis, I say! Here have I been bawling about the house for the better part of an hour searching for him—the graceless vagrant. Francis!" Thus he went on, growling and grumbling, and poking into every hole and corner, with a physiognomy most unnaturally crabbed, and a voice feeble and shrewish. At last he sat himself down on the stool, laid aside his stick, and began examining the loose papers on the desk; first putting on a pair of cracked spectacles to assist his sight. Besides being short and old—that is, of some sixty years or more—he was of a marvellous spare body; and his sharp nose and pointed chin, small eyes and saturnine complexion, did not appear to more advantage, surrounded by a scanty beard that had become quite grizzled by age. His attire was of the homeliest—nay, it gave evidence of more than ordinary thrift—for his trunks were patched, and his hose were darned, and his shoes would have looked all the better had they been indebted to the craft of the cordwainer. As for his doublet, it was of a most ancient fashion, and though the cloth was originally a Lincoln green, it had become, by long use, and exposure to all sorts of weathers, more resembling the dingy hue of a smoked rafter.

As he scrutinized the papers, he broke out into such vehement ejaculations as these:—

"This account not finished! Here's a villanous neglect of my interests! Here's a shameful contempt of my authority! Here's flat contradiction and horrible ingratitude! Oh, the abominable and most pestilent knave! whilst he eats me out of house and home—costs me a world and all in tailoring and other charges—he leaveth my business to take care of itself. But what have we here?" he exclaimed, as he commenced examining a paper that had evidently been concealed among the others. "Verses, or I'm a heathen!" cried he in a tone of consternation. "Nay, if he takes to such evil courses, it must needs come to hanging."

While he was intent upon perusing with angry exclamations the contents of the object that had excited his displeasure, he suddenly felt a hand upon his shoulder, and turning round with no small degree of alarm impressed upon his unamiable features, he observed a young female—by her dress probably of the middle ranks. She wore on the back of her head a small velvet hat, from under which escaped several long dark tresses, that, parted in the front, set off to great advantage a right comely face, of a very rich complexion, which was made infinitely more attractive by a pair of delicate, dark hazel eyes, peculiarly seductive in their expression. Her age might be somewhat beyond twenty; for her form was fully rounded, and moulded into the most ex-

ellent proportions, which were admirably apparelled in a neat boddice and a ainty farthingale. In truth, she was a amsel possessed of all the perfections of womanhood.

"You sweet rogue, how you frightened me!" exclaimed the old man, the surprise and alarm he had exhibited in his countenance now giving place to pleasure and admiration, as he gazed upon the smiling beauty before him.

"But what hath so put your temper into vital jeopardy, good Gregory Vellum?" added she coaxingly, as she leaned over his shoulder, seemingly the better to observe the writing he held in his hand.

"Marry, matter enough, sweetest," replied he; "that undutiful and most hardened reprobate, my nephew—a plague on all parents that can not provide for their own offspring, say I—unmindful of the great expenses he hath put me to, not only leaves my business unattended, whenever I am not watching his movements, but passeth the times he should employ for my advantages in destroying my paper, pens, and ink, in scribbling a whole host of pernicious verses."

"Oh, the profligate!" cried the other, as if marvelling greatly; but still stretching out her pretty neck to see what was written on the paper.

"I am glad to see that you regard his atrocious wickedness with a proper detestation," repeated the other. "But that be not the worst of his villany. Only think of the pestilent varlet robbing me of these fine bits of candle, which in my search for him a moment since I found secreted away in his chamber." And thereupon, with a look of terrible indignation, he brought out of his vest, carefully wrapt up in an old rag, three candle-ends, each about an inch long.

"What wonderful iniquity!" exclaimed she, giving a hasty glance at the contents of the rag, and then again quickly fixing her gaze upon the paper.

"Ay, that is it with a vengeance," replied the old man. "Now, he stealeth these pieces of candle—a murrain on him for his abominable dishonesty—and burneth them when I, his too indulgent uncle, am fast asleep; and there he sits, wearing out the night in studying a most unprofitable lot of heathenish books. But take this trumpery and read it, Mistress Joanna, for he writes such an unnatural fine hand that my poor eyes ache with looking at it."

The fair Joanna took the paper somewhat eagerly, and without a second summons or a word of reply, stood before the old man, and, as he wiped his spectacles and put them away, and carefully folded up the candle-ends, she read what follows:—

A RIGHT EARNEST EXPOSTULATION:

ADDRESSED TO HER WHO WILL BEST UNDERSTAND IT.

HAVING so oft and fondly sung thy praise,
I find I can not thy defects portray;
My pen is ready for most flatt'ring lays,
But censures not: it knoweth not the way.
Thou, to my heart, hast given deep offence,
Yet see I in thee naught but excellence.

'Tis passing strange—but pity 'tis too true!
Thy goodness toward me doth seem to halt;
Things manifold thou dost unkindly do
Which pain me much—yet know I not thy fault;
For ev'ry day thou heapest on me wrongs
Find'st thou a perfect creature in my songs.

Wherefore is this?—'Tis thus—no long time since
Each day, each hour, each moment found me blest;
All the fond love thy nature could evince,
All the sweet goodness of thy gentle breast.
Didst thou in pure devotion render mine,
To teach me what of earth was most divine.

As a rude heathen who to stock and stone
Prostrates his soul in worship—when he knows
THE TRUTH that reigns almighty and alone,
He evermore with the true worship bows;
My idols I cast down, and knelt and prayed
Where, I knew well, my hopes of Heaven were laid.

Then bountifully were thy blessings showered;
And I, the sole receptacle they sought,
Have known my grateful spirit overpowered
'Neath the delighting burthens thou hast brought,
Oft didst thou say thou couldst love none but me;
And much I strived to be worthy thee.

But now—unhappy chance that brought this turn!
Thou dost deny me with excuses weak
The fondnesses for which my soul doth yearn,
And dost within another's eye balls seek
The charm, the spirit, and the joy that shone
In my rapt gaze reflected from thine own!

Nothing thou doest doth my eyes escape;
I know thy purposes—thy thoughts behold:
Alas, that they should often take a shape
Which multiplies my cares a thousand fold!
Alas, that thou art changed!—alas, indeed,
A plant so fair should bear such worthless seed!

But these stern words on thee must never fall;
'Tis my unlucky fortune that's to blame,
In my own heart I censure not at all;
For all thy goodnesses such footing claim,
That thy unkindnesses there find no place—
There is no room for things that seem so base.

Cease I to be of value in thy sight?
The worth I owned hath vanished utterly:
The pebbles upon which thy feet alight
To me more estimable seem than I;
For as the moon doth borrow all her shine,
My worthiness hath had its source in thine.

Fault none of mine is it that I am not
So precious as thy love hath made me seem;
Thou prized me then for worth I had not got;
And now thou dost my meed too lowly deem:
Yet if thou thinkest me such sort as this,
Am I the very poorest thing that is.

I know not why that thou shouldst now prefer
Another to a heart so much thine own:
I'd say no more if it were worthier,
But doubt I much it love like mine hath known
Oh, would I could forget that thou wert kind,
Or thou wouldst act more truly to my mind!

Remember this—the threat'ning cataract
That loudest roars, is used for no man's hands;
And 'mid thy minds best stores retain this fact—
The humblest waters may have golden sands:
Then scorn not thou the lowliest things that toil—
The treasures of the earth are in the soil.

"Flat disobedience and rank atheism!" exclaimed the old man, after he had listened with evident impatience to the perusal of the poem—"Didst ever hear of such heathenish notions? not to say that I understand it—I'd rather be hanged than understand any such villany. But what think you of it, Mistress Joanna? I see the horrible impiety of it hath quite discomposed you."

In truth, what Gregory Vellum had stated, was nigh unto the fact; for Joanna had quickly discovered that the verses she was reading were written for her, and intended for her eye alone; and as the allusions they contained struck upon her mind, her changing color denoted how much she was moved by them. When she came to the end she was, for a few minutes, utterly disconcerted. She seemed lost in a maze of conflicting thoughts; her brow became dark, and her eyes fixed, and so completely had she given herself up to her own reflections, that she heard not the question that had been put to her.

"What say you, sweetheart?" said he familiarly, laying his hand upon her shoulder. "Doth not your hair stand on end to see how he misuseth me? Why, he costs me a matter of a groat a week for his diet—for he hath the appetite of two carriers—and then—the caitiff! to be robbing me in this monstrous manner, when candles are threepence to the pound—and to be scribbling his preposterous atrocities when stationary is at so high a cost. By my troth he hath nó more virtue than an addled egg! But what think you of the verses?"

"Sad stuff, Master Vellum," she replied, having perfectly recovered from her confusion; "but be assured there is no harm in them. I think he ought not to be encouraged in these practices; so I will e'en take the paper with me, and tear it to pieces as I go along."

"Ah, do, good Joanna! show upon it proper detestation of such thorough and most inconceivable villany," said he, as he observed her take possession of the poem. "But I must turn the rogue out of doors; he will ruin me straight an I do not; and I would as lief live among savages as exist with a knave who plundereth me by wholesale of such estimable candles' ends, and destroys me so many fair sheets of paper in inditing matters it would be a scandal to understand."

"Nay, good Master Vellum," observed his fair companion, "do not be so harsh with him. He is but young; and boys have a natural tendency for the perpetration of these offences. When he attaineth the becoming gravity of his uncle, he will give over all such primitive delinquencies."

"Dost think so, sweetest?" inquired the old man eagerly, as, with a most preposterous leer, he thrust his ungraceful countenance close to her beautiful face. "You are a woman of admirable discretion, and of a truly excellent fancy. Dost despise these raw youths; and couldst affect a man of more mature years?"

"Ay, marry, and why not?" inquired she very innocently.

"You are a most excellent wench!" exclaimed he with unaffected delight, as he seemed to feast his eyes upon the graces of her countenance—"one of ten thousand. Think you, you could rest content with an old man—nay, one not so old either—who would never be gadding from you like your young gallants, none of whom are ever to be trusted out of sight, but would nourish you, and cherish you, and fondle you, and make much of you, and none but you; and make you mistress of all his gold, his house, and chattels?"

"Ay, marry, why should I not?" repeated she in the same tone.

"Then you shall have *me*, sweetheart!" cried the old man in an ecstasy; and seeming, by the unsteady movement of his hands, with great difficulty to refrain from throwing his arms round her neck. "I have loved you for some months, sweetest! and all the little gifts I have bestowed upon you, were to show you how enamored I was of your most blessed condition. And I will tell you a secret, my love! my dove! my angel!—my paragon of womanhood!" continued he fidgeting about, and gloating upon her with his lack-lustre eyes as if he were bewitched. "Although I seem so poor—yet am I richer than I seem. Ay, am I. I have store of gold—bright yellow gold! Hush, there's no one listening, is there?" he all at once exclaimed, as, fearing he had said too much, he gave a restless glance around the room.

"Not a soul," replied Joanna, still retaining the same unmoved countenance.

"Yes, sweetheart," he continued, every now and then giving a suspicious

glance about him, "I have saved, and scraped, and hoarded up a goodly store of wealth, the result of infinite painstaking, and exceeding self-denial; and you shall enjoy it; you, my life, my queen! Oh, how I long to hug you in my most fond embrace."

"Softly, softly, Gregory Vellum," exclaimed she, quietly disengaging his arms from her neck; for, unable any longer to resist his impatient wishes, he had endeavored, as our great dramatist hath it, to suit the action to the word. "Modest maids are not to be won in such boisterous fashion, and it little becometh the respectability of your deportment to exhibit such unseemly violence. As for your love, you must prove it by something besides words. You have professed for some time to be hugely taken with me; but all professions are naught when unaccompanied by that which proveth their value. You are right liberal in promises, but your performance, as yet, hath been but scanty. If you have such store of gold as you talk of"—

"Hush! hush! not so loud, I prythee, sweetheart," whispered the old man, going cautiously to the door, on tiptoe, opening, and looking out, and closing it carefully after him.

"Of a surety you would act more generously toward me than you have yet done," continued Joanna, without attending to the interruption; "your true lovers are always bountiful. Now there is a certain Venetian chain"—

"Ay, 'tis of gold, and of most admirable workmanship," exclaimed Gregory Vellum, "it cost me fifty crowns, or I'm a villanous Jew. I did promise it you, I remember well; but if it please you, sweetest," continued the old man, sidling up to her, and leering in her face, "it shall be yours for a kiss. Accept you the conditions?"

"For your sake, I will say yes, good Gregory Vellum," replied she, without hesitation.

"It shall be yours—it shall be yours," cried the old man, chafing his hands, and every limb of him shaking with excitement. "Now give me the kiss, my heart! my soul! my life! give me the kiss, I prythee."

"The chain first, Gregory Vellum," said the other quietly, as she retreated from his proffered caresses.

"Ay, but wait awhile—wait awhile, sweetheart, and I will fetch it," said he, hastening to the door, in an agony of impatience, and immediately returning to her side, before he had got half way; "but when shall be the happy day?—name it, name it, excellent Joanna, for I do long for the time when we two shall be one."

"We will talk of that anon;—but, the chain," replied she.

"I fly, sweetest," cried the old man, shuffling off toward the door; but, just as he was about to open it, he came back hastily, with his eyes glistening, and his leaden countenance all of a glow, "we will spend all the yellow gold; we will live a right merry life. I'faith you shall have all that heart can desire, you shall, you shall, you shall, my queen of beauty!"

"The chain, worthy Gregory Vellum," repeated his fair companion, as she eluded his eager advances.

"I am gone," said he, again hastening off; but, before he opened the door, he turned round, clasped his skinny hands together, and turning up the whites of his eyes, exclaimed, "Indeed, I love thee infinitely."

"*That* for thy love," cried she spitting on the floor, with every mark of indignation and disgust, as soon as she heard him rapidly ascending the stairs—"that for thy love, thou most abhorred and infamous old dotard: but I will use thee. For the sake of one whose little finger is dearer to me than thy old moth-eaten carcase, I will make thee bring out thy long hoarded gold, and squander it right liberally." Then hearing a noise at the door which opened into the street, she looked to see who it was. The same modest youth entered to whom the reader hath been introduced, at Master Shakspeare his lodging, on the Bank Side.

"What, Joanna!" he exclaimed, hastening toward her, with a most smiling countenance—"nay, this is a pleasure I dreamt not of."

"'T is I, Francis," she replied, allowing him to take her hand, which he passionately pressed to his lips; "but thy cheek is flushed, and thine eye unsteady. What ails thee?"

"Nothing, dearest," said he, "I have been detained, and I thought my uncle would be angered with me for stopping; for thou know'st how easy he is of provocation, so I ran all the way home."

"Thou hadst best make haste, and conceal thyself somewhere for the nonce,' responded she, "for thy uncle hath just left me, meaning to return straight; and he is out of all temper with thee, for sundry offences which he saith thou hast committed. So go thy ways, and let me

see thee soon, for I have much to say to thee."

"I will do thy bidding lovingly; yet it is a most regretful thing to be obliged to leave thee," he said, as with reluctant steps, and slow, he made toward the door. Then, keeping his eyes upon her till the last moment, eloquent with a most impassioned tenderness, he left the room.

"Poor boy!" murmured she, as with a countenance full of melancholy interest, she watched his departure—"poor boy! he little knoweth how many distasteful things I do for his dear sake."

At this moment Gregory Vellum was heard upon the stairs. There was a marked difference betwixt his going and his returning; for, whereas, in the first instance, he had galloped like an ostrich, now he was heard descending, step by step, so slow that it would not be a great stretch of fancy to say, he might have fallen asleep between whiles. Presently he opened the door, and instead of hastening toward Joanna, with enamored looks and impatient gestures, as might have been expected from his previous behavior, he advanced, at a laggard's pace, with his eyes fixed upon a glittering chain of gold, that he kept turning about in his hand, and with a face in which the demon of avarice, had evidently got the better of the demon of sensuality.

"How now!" exclaimed his companion, as she noticed his approach, "you went out as quick of motion as a young colt—you creep in with the preposterous tediousness of a snail."

"It cost me fifty crowns!" remarked he, still keeping his eyes on the precious metal, as if there was a fascination in it he could not withstand.

"Well, and what then?" inquired Joanna; "that is nothing to the store of gold of which you mean to make such generous use, you know."

"Ay, said I so!" said he quickly, and with a monstrous serious look, "no, 'twas a mistake. Gold! I have no gold; where should I get gold? I am poor, miserably poor, as you see. 'Tis a most admirable chain, and of right delicate workmanship," he continued feasting his eyes upon it, as it glittered in his hand.

"I'faith your love is of a most miserly disposition," responded she, smiling most bewitchingly all the time, "it preferreth a sorry chain to the object of its pretended adoration. By my troth, if I marry you after this, I'll vex myself into fiddle-strings."

"Ah! talked you of marrying, sweetest?" asked the old man eagerly, as he raised his eyes to her face; and, immediately they rested upon her well-favored countenance, they again began to twinkle with delight. "Truly have you the softest and most insinuating looks, and your smile is most absolute and irresistible. Your eyes, sweetheart, are as bright as this Venetian gold—but it cost me fifty crowns; and the pouting ripeness of your lips hath as much temptation as the polish upon the links; and, in good truth, 'tis a most rare and costly trinket." And thereupon he continued, now fixing his eyes upon the chain, and gloating upon its brilliance; and anon raising them to the face of his fair companion, as if doating upon its beauty. It was evident that there was a struggle in his soul, about parting with his property. He longed for a caress from the seductive Joanna: but the Venetian trinket had wound itself round his heart so strongly, that he could not bring himself to part with it. Several times it appeared that her soft glances had subdued his selfish nature; but just as he was on the point of giving up the object of his miserly regard, a look at its glittering links would again awake his avarice, and he would hesitate about its disposal.

"Good morning to you, Gregory Vellum," said Joanna, as she turned upon her heel, with the intention of departing by the door that led into the street.

"Nay, nay sweetest!" exclaimed the old man, as he hastened after her, and held her by the arm, "you go not yet; I part not with you in this way. Shall I have the kiss you promised me?"

"By my troth you shall," replied she; "but why ask you? You love your paltry gold better than me, or you would seem less loath to part with it; so I'll e'en have none of you."

"There is the chain, sweetheart," said he, eagerly throwing it round her neck, "and now for the kiss—the kiss—the kiss—my angel upon earth!—the kiss, sweet mistress Joanna; throw your soft arms around me, and press me your delicate lips."

"There's my hand," quietly replied she, as all impatience and eagerness, spite of her retreating, he advanced toward her, intent upon having her in his embrace.

"Your *hand!*" he exclaimed, with some surprise, as he still strove to approach her more closely, "'tis your rosy mouth that I would have, sweetheart."

"Nay, nay; a bargain is a bargain," said she gravely; "you gave me a chain, and I promised you should have a kiss for it. There was nothing said about my lips; and I intend only, as a great favor, that you should kiss my hand; so, fulfil your contract:—here's my hand."

At this, nothing could exceed the change that took place in the old man's countenance. His delight and impatience forsook him of a sudden. From being exceeding restless in all his limbs, he stood as still as a stone, and he looked perfectly confounded, and unable to say a word.

"Well, if you will not, mayhap another time will suit you better," observed Mistress Joanna very courteously, as she proceeded toward the door. "I thank you for the chain very heartily; 'tis a gift worthy of the gravity of your affections; and I know not, if you go on making a show of such liberal behavior, to what extent you may be rewarded. You ought, however, to be aware, that a prudent woman granteth but small favors at first; she will not give largely, or she may be undone straight. I wish you an increasing generosity; and with this desire, worthy Gregory Vellum, I do most delightedly take my leave of you." And thereupon she made a courtesy to the ground, and with one of the sweetest of smiles, departed from the office.

"Fool! dolt! idiot! madman!" cried he vehemently, as he beat his head with his clenched fist, "to be tricked, cozened, and imposed upon, in this barefaced manner, by a woman. Oh! Gregory Vellum, Gregory Vellum, what a very ass thou art! My chain of Venice gold is lost irretrievably, that I took for a debt of fifty crowns, and for which Master Ingot, the goldsmith, would have given me forty at any time. Oh! fool, that can only cozen boys and folks afar off, thou art cheated past all redemption!" Then he went and sat upon the stool, and leaned his head upon his hand, apparently in a monstrous melancholy humor. "Fifty crowns gone for nothing. Oh!" exclaimed he frantically, beating his heels against the stool, and then wringing his hands; "what a poor, wretched, miserable lunatic am I, to think of courting at my time of day. Such a brilliant chain! Oh! most preposterous idiot! fifty crowns! Oh! thou incomprehensible blockhead! I could beat out my brains with a whisp of straw, out of very vexation." And thereupon he jumped off the stool, being perfectly restless, and unable to contain himself, and did begin to shuffle up and down the room with his stick, flinging himself about, ejaculating all sorts of condemnations upon his folly and insanity, and looking with a physiognomy as woful and enraged as ever miser exhibited at the loss of a part of his gain.

Presently he stood still of a sudden; for a voice—a rich, clear, mellifluous voice—was heard singing the following words:—

"I gave my Love a posie gay,
Of all the sweetest flowers of May,
And bade her, till their leaves might die,
Upon her breast to let them lie.

'I'faith,' quoth she,
'Are these for me?
Like thy sweet words, how sweet they be.
But if thy maid
Thy love should aid,
Oh! bring her gifts that never fade.'"

"A murrain on him! that's my pestilent nephew," exclaimed the old man, in high dudgeon; "but I marvel infinitely how he got in; or hath he been in the house all the time?" He stopped, for the singer proceeded.

"I gave my Love a riband rare
To tie around her silken hair.
'Sweetheart,' quoth I, 'long may it grace
So brave, so proud a resting place.'

'Ah me,' she cried,
And looked and sighed,
'In this bright garb thy looks I've spied;
But see! 'twill fray
And wear away—
Oh! bring me gifts that last for aye.'"

"A pernicious varlet, will he never have done with his coxcombical singing," cried Gregory Vellum: but the singer continued his song.

"I gave my Love a golden ring,
To prize above each meaner thing,
And on her finger bade it rest,
While truth had footing in her breast.

'Dear heart, I vow,
Thou hast me now,'
She said, all blushing to her brow;
'The sterling ore
Lasts evermore,
And binds fond hearts unbound before.'"

"Oh! the unwhipped rogue! he sings of love at his age," exclaimed the old miser, in seeming consternation. "Well, who can doubt the wickedness of the world after this! But I'll trounce him, I'll warrant me. Francis!" he bawled, as loud as he could, first opening the door, that he might be heard, and then muttering to himself, and crying out by turns, proceeded thus: "A young profligate, to think of singing love ditties at his time of life;—was ever such iniquity in this world? Francis!" again screamed he, with all the strength of his lungs. "An' I do not make him hear, I'll make him feel. Francis! Francis! Francis! I say."

"Did you call, uncle?" said the youth quietly, as he presented himself at the door.

"Call, sirrah!" replied the old man, shaking with rage—"Call, varlet! have I not been bawling, and squalling, and tearing my lungs piecemeal after thee for these two hours past?"

"I did not hear you till this moment, or I should have come down," observed the youth.

"Hear me!" exclaimed Master Vellum vehemently—"how couldst thou expect to hear me, thou reprobate! when thou wert making the place ring with thy amorous ballads! Be that proper matter to sing at an honest scrivener's! Why, the passengers will take the house for a bagnio. Fie upon thee! when I was of thy age I sung psalms and godly hymns—but I was noted as a youth of a most modest discretion. What art *thou* noted for, I wonder?—for impudency, disobediency, and all manner of dishonesty."

"Dishonesty, uncle!" said Master Francis, with unaffected surprise.

"Ay, dishonesty, sirrah! Look here!" and he took from his vest the dirty rag that hath previously been described, and begun carefully to unfold it—"here be a foul robbery thou hast committed. How didst get these fine pieces of candle I found in thy room? Hast no shame? What! pilfer from thy poor, yet too liberal uncle, when candles stand me in fifty crowns to the pound!"

"Fifty crowns, uncle!" exclaimed his nephew, with increasing astonishment—"why, I bought them myself of Tobias Mottle, the chandler over the way, and then they had only rose to threepence for the pound, in consequence of the exceeding scarcity of kitchen stuff."

"Well, no matter, sirrah, no matter!" cried the old man, in no way abating his passion, "thou hast robbed me—that is manifest. Thou hast taken advantage of the natural generosity of my disposition, and art in the habit of consuming my substance without my privity. I tell thee it be infamous—I tell thee it be a felony—I tell thee it be hanging, whipping, and the pillory. What a monster of ingratitude thou art, to defraud me of such exquisite gold of Venice of which they are made."

"Gold of Venice, uncle!" exclaimed the youth, almost inclined to laugh at the idea; "nay, if they be not made of the most notorious tallow, I am a heathen."

"Tush! I forgot," replied Gregory Vellum, striking his stick violently against the floor; "but it availeth thee nothing; thou art a thief."

"I am no thief, sir," said the youth, reddening in the face; "I do confess that I took what you have in your hand, that I might have light to assist me in my studies; but if the loss grieve you, they can not be worth more than a halfpenny, and you may either keep them, or I will pay you for them."

"Pay, pay! why, how now? who talks of paying? where dost get the money from, fellow?" rapidly inquired the old man, fixing on his nephew a searching and inquisitive look; "and how camest thou by those heathenish books of which thou hast such goodly store?"

"I had them from a friend," replied Master Francis; "and I am obliged to be indebted to the same quarter for such assistance as my necessities require—which are caused by those who should have taken care that I lack nothing."

"Lack!—what dost lack? thou ungrateful vagabond!" demanded his uncle angrily, yet not ill pleased that such things were not done at his cost; "do I not find thee a most comfortable home?—do I not keep thee in excellent wearing apparel?—and as for eating, didst thou not eat right heartily yesterday at dinner of a most princely dish of cabbage and bacon?"

"As for the home, uncle," said the youth, "your penuriousness and ill-temper make it anything but comfortable. For the clothing—when you have worn your doublet threadbare, you think it good enough for me. And as for my dinner yesterday, it consisted of a piece of rusty bacon, scarcely big enough for the baiting of a rat-trap, with about as much cabbage as might serve for a caterpillar's breakfast."

"Oh, thou unnatural prodigal!" exclaimed Master Vellum, lifting np his hands and eyes in amazement. "This comes of writing verses!—this comes of singing love-songs! O' my life, I have a monstrous inclination to beat thee."

"You had better not, uncle," said the other calmly.

"Nay, but I will, caitiff!" replied he, lifting up his stick and approaching his nephew threateningly.

"If you do," said Master Francis, his face now as pale as it a moment since was rubicund—"if you do, I'll give you such a shaking you never had since you were born."

"Hub—bub—boo!" exclaimed the old

man, starting back, stammering, several paces, as if the threat had taken his breath away: and there he stood, with stick uplifted and mouth open, looking the very picture of horror and surprise. In fact, the conduct of his nephew had come upon him with a most perfect astonishment; for the natural modesty of the youth's disposition had hitherto made him bear his uncle's ill humors with meekness; but possibly the wine he had drunk with Master Shakspeare had put a bolder spirit into his nature. There, however, did he stand, pale and melancholy, yet resolute, with arms folded, and eyes with an unmoved fixedness resting upon his terrified kinsman.

"Oh, the monstrousness of the age!" at last ejaculated Gregory Vellum, "Oh, the horrid villany! But thou shalt troop for it. I will get rid of thee straight. Thou shalt find other uncles to give thee house-room, and feed and clothe thee, thou pestilent varlet! for I'll have none of thee. Was it not enough that thou shouldst rob me of fifty crowns—tush! what was I a saying?—of so much excellent candle—but that thou shouldst threaten to give me a shaking of right exquisite Venetian workmanship—Alas! these villanies have undone me! I know not what I say." Then wildly knocking the palm of his hand against his forehead, the old man rushed out of the room, shouting "Oh, my fifty crowns! my fifty crowns!" leaving Master Francis in as great a wonder as Master Francis had a moment since put his miserly kinsman.

CHAPTER III.

"Love me not for comely grace,
For my pleasing eye or face,
Nor for any outward part,
Nor for my too constant heart.
For those may fail or turn to ill,
And thus our love shall sever;
Keep therefore a true woman's eye.
And love me still—yet know not why
So hast thou the same reason still
To dote upon me ever." WILBYE.

"A combination and a form indeed,
Where every god did seem to set his seal
To give the world assurance of a man."
SHAKSPEARE.

It was in a private closet in the queen's palace of Whitehall, that two of her majesty's maids of honor were assisting each other in attiring, and were conversing with that confidence that denoteth perfect friendship. The one, the taller of the two, was of a most majestic shape, with a countenance of exquisite softness, pressed with a touch of reflection, tha times made her seem somewhat of a served and melancholy disposition: in truth she was a most handsome man, and of an excellent fair complex The other appeared both shorter younger; her face was dark, yet did roses bloom in it most becomingly; arched mouth she had, dimpled on cheek, and as for her eyes, they were most laughing, roguish, brilliant pai twinklers that ever pretty wench blessed withal. Of these fair dams the first was Elizabeth Throckmor and the latter, her cousin Alice.

"What dost sigh for, Bess?" sudde inquired the youngest. "O' my tr thou hast appeared very woful of late

"Did I sigh, Alice?" asked the ot dejectedly.

"Sigh, coz!" repeated Alice. " old bellows with fifty holes in it e breathed with so undone a sadness. T comes of being in love, Bess. Art si ing for Sir Walter Raleigh? I see thy blushing I have hit it. Well, Hea help thy five wits, that can find ma for sadness in things that give me s infinite matter for mirth. And what this same animal, called man? A th to laugh at—a joke that goes upon legs—a walking piece of provocation women to break a jest upon. Is he a most absurd creature? I'faith, us maids would have all died of melanch long since, if the men had not kept alive by affording us such exquisite jects for sport. And then the airs t give themselves. Didst ever see a cock in the sun? he spreads himself just like your man animal; and st about, and looks as preposterously and proud. Poor fool! a goose wo look as well had it the same feath And, like the clown in the play, he tak a world of pains to get well laughe by his audience. Well, I think I not gratitude. I owe a bountiful load thanks to these our estimable benefact and all that my poor wit can do to ren them as ridiculous as they seek to they shall have. They call themsel lords of the creation too, when they h about as much omnipotence as a coc shell. Whatever lords they may be they shall never be lords of my bed-ch ber, I promise you; for, before I marr man, I'll give my virginity to an owl.

"Alice, Alice! how thou dost run o exclaimed Mistress Throckmorton.

"Ay, forsooth, had I no legs I co

run on with such a subject," replied her cousin, laughing merrily. "But how dost like the setting of this sleeve?"

"It is of a pretty fashion, and of most dainty fabric," said the other, with a careless glance at the dress.

"That all thou canst say about it?" responded her companion archly. "Had I asked thee concerning the captain of the queen's guard, wouldst thou have merely said, 'It is of a pretty fashion, and of a most dainty fabric?'" here the merry little creature mimicked her companion. "O' my word, no—I should never have heard the last of him. Thou wouldst have given me whole chapters upon every hair of his head."

"But is he not a wise and most noble gentleman?" asked her cousin earnestly.

"Wise, quotha!" exclaimed Alice, with a smile of peculiar meaning. "Wise man?—wise fiddlestick! In what is he wise? Doth he not talk admirably? So doth a parrot if it be well taught. Wise oyster! And there is but little difference betwixt your oyster and your man. Your oyster hath a beard, so hath your man;—so he need not brag so much on that account. But the difference be all in favor of your oyster; for your oyster is delicate eating, but your man is for no Christian stomach, cook him how you will. Wise calf! Why, there is more philosophy in a forked radish than ever you will find in your wise man."

"In truth, Alice, if I did not know thee to be a most kind-hearted wench and a merry, I should think thee very malicious," observed the eldest.

"I bear no malice against the poor creatures," replied the other, with pretended meekness. "It would be a right shameful return for the unceasing efforts they make to amuse me. Well, it be not their fault that they have not more sense; and considering how foolish they are by nature, I must do them the justice to say, that they do as well as they can."

"But I can not love thee, if thou wilt not love Walter," said Mistress Throckmorton, looking with much seriousness in the face of her witty relative.

"Love him, coz!" exclaimed Alice, affectionately kissing her forehead. "I will do anything to pleasure thee."

And thereupon the two cousins did caress one another with a lovingness that was most touching to behold.

"But if he make thee melancholy, I'll be hanged if I love him," continued she with much emphasis.

"It be not his fault, dear Alice," replied her companion. "He is always good and kind and noble. I alone am to blame—I am very much to blame." And, saying this, she suddenly did throw herself upon the neck of her kinswoman, in an uncontrollable agony of hysteric sobs and tears; and wept outright.

"Bess! Bess! Cousin! Elizabeth!" cried the now alarmed and anxious Alice. "What meaneth this? Why are these tears—and for what art thou to blame? Nay, this is mere folly. If the queen find out that Sir Walter love thee, she may be wrath with him and thee for a time, but it will all blow over harmlessly, I'll be bound for it; and there is no occasion to fret thyself till it happen. Come, dry up thy tears, or I will not let thee see him for a month."

"I must see him this morning, dear Alice!" remarked her cousin earnestly. "Thou must contrive to let me have speech with him here; for it is of the utmost importance."

"*Here*, cousin!"

"Ay, here, Alice," replied she; "my life, all that is dear to me, depends upon it."

"Well, if that be the case, I'll strive whatever my love can do to bring it about," responded the other. "But see how monstrously thou hast rumpled my ruff. If the queen see it, she will swear I have been romping." At this they both strove to smooth the creases as well as they could. "And now let me help thee on with thy robe," she continued, as she assisted in attiring her. "Ah, love's a sad thing, and therefore I like it not, dear Bess; for I like merry things."

"Thou wilt change thy tune anon, depend on't," said the elder.

"Change my tune? I'll change my nature first," replied the other. "By my troth, if the sky were to rain lovers, I'd keep under shelter. Save in the way of sport, if ever I have anything to do with these man animals—why then pickle me. And what a set I have around me at this present! Noah's ark contained not such another. First, I have my Lord Burghley, who looks as virtuous as small beer, and is just as sour upon occasion. He taketh upon him to commend my beauty, when the lord treasurer desireth to make himself agreeable to the maid of honor; then sayeth he, with a very infinite gravity, 'Be chary of thy smile, mistress; butter melts i' the sun! butter melts i' the sun!'" And here she mimicked the voice and manner of that most worshipful and profound statesman, of glorious memory,

and then proceeded imitating, in the same ludicrous way, the different individuals she named. "Then comes young gravity, his son, Sir Robert Cecil, who hath a smile for every one, and—nothing else; and as he happens to be possessed of a person in no way flattering to the eye, he chooseth to make use of a tongue in every way flattering to the ear. 'Sweet Alice,' saith he, in a whisper if he happen to stand by me in the throng, 'indeed, I can not help but think thee the flower of the whole court.' After him we have Lord Henry Howard—or rather with him, for they generally hunt in couples, like hounds of better breed; and he is somewhat of a soldier—somewhat of a sailor—somewhat of a gallant, and a great deal of a courtier; and he kisseth my hand cavalierly, and looketh into my eye as if he saw something there he had lost—his own modesty, mayhap, if he ever had any—and sweareth me one of the newest oaths, saying, 'I could stand the enemy, but not those lustrous orbs!'"

"Alice, thy wit will be the ruin of thee."

"Then cometh my Lord Pembroke, the hopeful pupil of that marvellous scholar and exquisite specimen of chivalry, Sir Philip Sidney," continued the laughing girl. "And he readeth me an essay an hour long on the surpassing virtues of the dames of antiquity; and looking the very pink of courtesy, telleth me, 'Thou wouldst make an admirable Arcadian shepherdess, only the infinite roguery that lurks in the dimple of thy cheek would create a world of mischief among the swains.' Then comes my lord chamberlain, the bluff and martial Earl of Sussex, with guns and pistols in his looks, and cannon-balls in his conversation; and he salutes me most soldierly, with an "Hullo, mistress! were I for kissing, I know the pair of lips I'd choose out of a thousand.' After him we have the proud and impetuous Essex—all splendor—all gallantry—all impulse—and all nothing: and he cometh to me alone with an irresistible air, protesting, 'By this hand, an' I love thee not I am a Turk.'"

"Alice! Alice!" exclaimed her cousin seriously, "if thou art heard saying this, thou art utterly undone."

"Then cometh the gallant, gay, the learned, witty, brave, and handsome—in fact, the very thing—Sir Walter Raleigh."

"Alice!" cried Mistress Elizabeth Throckmorton, reproachfully.

"Well, dear Bess, I will say nothing of him, since it doth not please thee," replied her companion. "And now, because thou art quite ready, and I have teased thee in some measure, I will go and seek the noble captain; for, if I mistake not, he must by this time be in attendance."

"There's a good wench!" exclaimed her cousin, kissing her affectionately. "But be cautious in thy proceeding, for if the queen know of his being with thee, Walter will be ruined and I undone."

"Be cautious! will I not?" replied the light-hearted creature, with a toss of her little head. "I'll be as sly as a cat stealing of cream; and if her majesty find me out, I'll e'en give her leave to box my ears, as she did those of the lovely Mistress Bridges, who was guilty of having had the presumption to be admired by the imperial Essex. But Bess," continued she, turning round with an arch look, as she reached the door, "'t is a burning shame thou shouldst be in love. I marvel at it hugely. Well, if ever thou catchest me possessed of any of thy melancholy humors, I'll give thee leave to shut me up in a mouse-trap." And with a laugh as shrill and musical as the alarum of a silver bell, did the pretty piece of mirth and mischief leave the room.

But her cousin was in no mood to join in her merriment; and immediately Alice was gone she sat herself down in a chair, and there stole over her fair countenance an expression of deep and right eloquent sadness. She sat with her arms crossed upon her lap, most dejectedly; and her soft eyes, swimming in tears, fixed upon the floor. And in that position did she continue for at least the fourth part of an hour, feeding reflection with the delicious food of memory, mingled with so many fearful forebodings as were sufficient, with their bitterness to spoil the sweetness of her thoughts. She wept not, neither did she smile; but it seemed as if in her admirable features there was going on a continual struggle between the most exquisite pleasure and the most direful apprehension, and the latter got such mastery as might suffice to give her lids as much moisture as they could carry, and impress on her well-favored aspect, a character of more than ordinary grief. Anon, her eyes becoming overcharged, there was cast down upon each cheek a tear-drop, and the light falling thereon from the window near which she sat, did make its brilliancy so apparent, that it

would have put to shame the brightest jewel that ever glittered in her stomacher; and these gems of purest water, as if enamored of their fair-resting place, sought not to move from the spot where they had fallen; which gave to her the appearance of a most beautiful and moving Niobe.

Presently she heard a footstep in the corridor, and her heart thereupon began to beat with a more perceptible throbbing. The footstep approached, and the color mounted to her cheek—it stopped at the door, and the cheek became pale as marble. In a moment the door opened quickly, and was as quickly closed; and, as a cavalier of a most noble appearance entered the room, with a half-stifled cry of exultation, she rushed toward him, and sunk swooning upon his breast.

In truth, the cavalier was of a most valiant and commendable presence. His high and expansive forehead was partly concealed by his hat (in which was a little black feather, with a large ruby and pearl drop at the bottom of the sprig, in place of the button); yet sufficient of it was observable to denote the fine intellect that lay within. His eyes were large and intelligent—his nose somewhat long, yet not out of proportion—his lips delicately curved, with a fair mustache on the upper lip, and a beard of moderate growth, handsomely rounded under the chin beneath, encircled by a frilled ruff; and his complexion was somewhat browned, as if by exposure to foreign climates, or hard service in the wars. His stature was six feet full, with limbs elegantly yet strongly moulded. He was apparelled in a white satin pinked vest, close sleeved to the wrist, having over the body of it a brown doublet, finely flowered, and embroidered with pearls; with a belt of the same color and ornament, on the left side of which hung his sword, and on the other was seen the pommel of his dagger. His trunks, with his stockings and riband garters, were all of white, and fringed at the end; and his shoes were of buff, tied with white ribands. He might be somewhere between thirty and forty years of age; that is to say, in the very prime and vigor of his life. And a braver soldier, a handsomer man, or a more accomplished gentleman, the court of Elizabeth did not contain at that time.

"Bess! Bess! dear, sweet, exquisite Bess!" cried he flinging down his hat, and pressing her in his arms. "By Heaven! she hath swooned," he exclaimed, as he observed her head droop, and her cheek quite pallid: then cautiously fastening the door, he bore his lovely burden to where stood an ewer of water, which he began presently to sprinkle on her face, all the while using most endearing expressions and caresses, and exhibiting a truly earnest solicitude.

"They have fastened thy boddice most infamously tight, dear Bess, and 'tis beyond my poor wit to loose it," said he earnestly, as he tried unavailingly to undo the fastenings of her robe. "S'blood, I have a good mind to rip it up with my dagger; and if she recover not quickly, I will. Dear, dear Bess!" he continued, with more emphasis, as he began vigorously to chafe her hands. "Revive thee, girl—revive! 'Tis I—'tis Walter—*thy* Walter, dear Bess. There is nothing to fear, believe me. We have no one near, the queen's in the council chamber, and I have well excused my attendance. Come, Bess, I say—sweetest! dearest! best! my heart! my life!—Ha, she revives!" he cried joyfully, as he observed signs of returning animation in her countenance. "Indeed, I have a mind to scold thee—only I have no heart to do it."

"Walter! *dear* Walter!" murmured the beautiful woman, fixing upon him a look of most impassioned tenderness, directly she recovered sufficient consciousness of where and with whom she was; and then throwing her arms around his neck, and resting her head upon his shoulder, began to sob violently.

"Now, Bess, this is unkind of thee," said Sir Walter in rather a reproaching tone; but immediately added with a kinder voice, "but what aileth thee, sweetest?"

"Oh, I have undone thee—I have undone thee quite!" exclaimed she, as plainly as her sobs would allow.

"Not while I wear a sword, dear Bess, and am free to go where I will," he replied.

"The queen will know all, dear Walter—*she* must discover it soon."

"Why so, dear Bess?" inquired Sir Walter.

"Alas! I can not tell thee—no, indeed, I can not tell thee, dear Walter," said Mistress Elizabeth, sobbing more violently; "but I must leave this place. Do take me away. I can not stay here but a very short time longer without utter destruction to thy fortunes. Oh! take me away, Walter—take me away!"

"It shall be as thou desirest, sweetest," replied Raleigh, stooping down and kiss-

ing her cheek. "I have already arranged with thy father for a private marriage before I embark on a voyage, the good results of which I hope will win my pardon from the queen."

"Thanks, dear Walter," exclaimed she, looking gratefully upon him through her tears; "thou art always good, and noble, and generous; but I am fearful it will be thy utter undoing."

"Think not of it, Bess," said her lover kindly, "and then it can not fright thee. But the danger is none so imminent. I shall not let her majesty know of our marriage, if it can be helped. Thou shalt get away from here as if on a visit to thy father in Aldgate, and so excite no suspicions; in the meantime, I will increase my attentions to the queen, so that she shall have no reason to quarrel with my behavior; and when thou art secure in thy asylum, I shall start in my good ships for the voyage I intend."

"I would not have thee anger the queen for worlds," observed the other; "for it is in her power to make thy fortunes, or mar them. Elizabeth hath a very woman's heart in some things, though she be masculine enough in others; and she loveth the adulation of handsome men. She much regardeth thee, dear Walter, I know, and from that I am fearful that her knowledge of thy marriage will deeply affect thy prosperity. Indeed, I would rather die than that thou shouldst receive injury for my sake."

"O' my life, thou art a most admirable creature," exclaimed Sir Walter, as he rapturously pressed her within his arms; "and I should be totally unworthy of possessing that rich argosie, thy affections, were I not to risk my life, and all that to it do belong, in endeavoring to secure thy peace of mind. I fear not consequences in such a case, dear Bess. As for the queen, I know that flattery is rarely unacceptable to her; and her name and thine being the same, I can easily quiet the scruples of my conscience, if they say aught against my insincerity, by imagining that it is to thee my homage is addressed."

"I care not, Walter, what thou sayest or what thou doest, as long as thou holdest thy proper quality and station in the court," replied the devoted woman; and then, with a sudden look of right earnest affection, continued—"thy proper quality, said I?—nay, if thou attainest that, by my troth, thou wouldst be king of them all."

"Oh, thou outrageous flatterer!" cried Raleigh, sportively shaking his head at her.

"'Tis no flattery, dear Walter—'tis the very truth," said Mistress Elizabeth fondly. "And who can look on thy noble form, clad in these princely vestments, and not say the same? But above all, who can regard thy noble mind—that costly jewel in a rich case—and deny thy pre-eminence?"

"Bess! Bess! if thou goest on at this rate," replied Sir Walter, with an assumed gravity, "I shall be reduced to follow the obsolete custom of blushing, which will bear hardly upon me, seeing that I lack blushes most abominably."

At this moment a quick, light footstep was heard proceeding along the corridor, and Mistress Elizabeth, as soon as she recognised it, disengaged herself from the embraces of her lover, hastened to the door, which she immediately unfastened, and opening it, gave entrance to her cousin Alice.

"A plague on this love, say I," exclaimed she laughingly, as she bounced into the room nearly out of breath.

"What's the matter, Alice?" inquired her cousin anxiously.

"Ay, what's the matter, sweet coz!" added Sir Walter.

"Coz! coz, indeed!" cried Alice, somewhat disdainfully, yet with an arch glance of her eye, as she turned sharp round upon the last speaker—"I prythee keep thy *coz*-ening for those who will listen to thee. I'll have none on't."

"I'faith, Alice, if thy wit be always so sharp, thou wilt lead apes in the next world, depend on't," said Raleigh.

"I don't know, sweet sir, whether there be apes in the next world," said she, with a courtesy to the ground; "but o' my word there be nothing else to lead in this, as I can see."

At this Sir Walter good humoredly did laugh outright; in which he was heartily joined by his merry companion.

"But what brought thee into the room so post-haste, Alice?" inquired Mistress Elizabeth.

"Marry, matter enough," replied she; "there be the queen's majesty in her chamber inquiring most piteously for her captain of the guard, and sending the ushers and the grooms in all directions after the lost sheep. I being asked if I knew where he was to be found, did innocently answer, that having for some time past suspected him of the criminal intention of setting the Thames on fire, I did opine that he might be met with in the

buttery, begging the loan of a wax taper for the nonce."

"I'll give thee a beating for that," cried Sir Walter laughingly, as following her round the chamber with his glove he did whip her over the shoulder, while she, ducking her pretty head, cried out, and sought to avoid the blows.

"Help, good coz, help!" she cried to her cousin, who stood by, showing by her sweet, smiling countenance that she did mightily enjoy the scene. "Help! or this valiant Sir Walter Raleigh, who maketh war upon women, will get the better of me."

"Nay, Alice, I'll help thee not—for thou dost richly deserve all that thou receivest," said Mistress Elizabeth.

"Confess that thou hast slandered me, thou pretty mischief," exclaimed Raleigh, holding up the glove threateningly, as she crouched down at his feet.

"I will confess, holy father," replied she, with an admirable mock seriousness, as she put her palms together, and turned up her brilliant eyes to his—all the while a smile playing about her dimpled cheek that gave to her face an expression of archness infinitely pleasant to look upon.

"In the first place, holy father, the queen is not in her chamber, because she is still with the lords of the council."

"Oh, thou abominable transgressor!" cried Sir Walter, with all the seriousness he could assume.

"In the second place, she hath not sent for thee, because she requireth thee not."

"Daughter! daughter! thy iniquity is palpable," said he with he same gravity.

"In the last place, I have just met with master secretary, who saith that the council is about to break up, and inquired if I had seen thee. Thereupon I sent him where I knew he would not find thee, and hastened to where I knew I should."

"Thou most do penance for this," observed Raleigh; then somewhat maliciously added, "therefore I do condemn thee to the scarcely endurable punishment of holding thy tongue for a whole hour."

"I' faith thou hast it this time, Alice!" exclaimed Mistress Elizabeth, with undisguised glee.

"And now, beauties, I must be under the painful necessity of hurrying my departure," said Sir Walter, taking up his hat, and gallantly bowing to the fair cousins; then smiling triumphantly on the laughing Alice, who had remained on the floor where he had left her, wearing the most pitiful face that eye ever beheld, he was about to make his exit, when Mistress Elizabeth rushed before him.

"Stop, Walter," cried she, hastily, "till I see if the coast be clear for thee," as she opened the door, and looking out cautiously, immediately added, in a more subdued voice—"'tis as it should be; and now, dear Walter, let me once more entreat of thee to keep on good terms with the queen."

"I will strive all I can, dear Bess," replied her lover, affectionately raising her hand to his lips, "and be sure that thou make proper and speedy preparations for thy departure from this place."

"I will not fail," said the beautiful woman; and, in the next moment, she was watching the noble form of her affianced husband retreating with hasty strides along the corridor.

Sir Walter Raleigh proceeded onward, passing several doors on each side of him, and various passages that led to divers parts of the palace, till he came to a staircase of fair proportions, the balustrades of which were finely carved, having at their extremities rampant lions, most ingeniously wrought out of the solid wood. At the bottom of this flight of steps he passed sundry of the yeomen of the guard, placed there upon duty, who gave him instant salutation; and still advancing, met with pages, grooms, and ushers, hastening on their business, who, with great show of respect, did do him reverence. With these were sometimes mingled the higher officers of the palace, and gentlemen and noblemen of the court, either intent upon their duties, or discoursing with one another, as they walked carelessly along, and with them he did exchange abundance of courtesies. As he was turning sharply round a corner, he came suddenly against a courtier of a very notable aspect, and of right commendable habiliments; his face was fair to look upon, and dressed with a constant smile. An observer might suppose him of an ingenuous nature, and of a remarkable honesty; gentle in his behavior, upright in his conduct, and chivalrous in his disposition: yet was he a thorough courtier, as will anon be made manifest to the reader. He was young; that is to say, of some thirty years or so; and being of a handsome figure and countenance, his apparel, though it lacked the splendor of Sir Walter Raleigh's, was evidently

worn to set them off to the best advantage.

"Odds pittikins, Sir Walter," exclaimed he, laughingly, as he recovered himself from the shock, "dost take me for a Spanish galleon, that thou runnest me down in this pitiless fashion?"

"Thy pardon, my good lord," replied Sir Walter, as he held out his hand, which the other shook with all the fervor of old friendship, "Lord Henry Howard hath so proved himself the queen's good soldier, as to make it impossible for any one to take him for a Spaniard."

"Nay, thou flatterest me there," said the Lord Howard, with an appearance of considerable modesty, "I did but follow the example of that worthy and approved good knight, Sir Walter Raleigh —and but at an humble distance, as all must who would tread in his valiant footsteps. But, confess—confess thee, man! wert thou not dreaming of another armada, and wert intent on boarding the biggest ship of them all, when thou didst bear down upon me with thy whole broadside so courageously?"

"Indeed, my lord, I was thinking of a different matter," replied his companion.

"I doubt thee hugely," responded the other, shaking his head, "for 'tis so much in thy fashion. Then wert thou busying thy most fruitful imagination in search of new discoveries, and, instead of steering into some delectable bay, full of all enticing prospects, thou of a sudden didst drop thy anchor upon my new doublet—was it not so?"

"Thou art again in the wrong, my lord," replied Sir Walter, smiling; "I was on no such voyage. I am bound to her majesty, where my attendance is required. If nothing better await thy pleasure, will it please thee walk with me, my lord?"

"I am infinitely gratified by thy courtesy," said Lord Henry, with a most courtier-like inclination of his head, as he proceeded alongside of his companion, "and will do myself that honor. The queen is expected in the presence chamber, on her return from the council; and I was but making a stroll in the meanwhile, when thou didst me the especial favor of nearly running me down. But what a superlative taste thou hast in thy appointments," suddenly exclaimed he, as he noticed the splendid attire of Sir Walter; "'tis most exquisitely fashioned, and of a very dainty conceit."

"Dost like it, my lord?" inquired Raleigh, carelessly.

"On mine honor, I admire it hugely," responded his lordship, with a vast show of admiration. "I marvel not thou shouldst be the very model of dress amongst us, for thou art truly delicate in the choice of thy fabrics, and infinitely curious in the manner in which they are to be worn. I do know a certain lord who would give his ears, had he thy apprehension of these things."

"Be his ears so long then, that he would get rid of them for so trifling a result?" asked his companion, with some affectation of seriousness.

"In truth thou hast hit it," exclaimed the Lord Howard, with a hearty laugh. "Between ourselves, he is marvellously apt to play Midas to thy Apollo."

"By what name goeth he?" inquired Sir Walter; "for as far as my penetration sufficeth, I know of none such."

"Dost not know the earl of Essex?" whispered the other.

"Most assuredly do I, for a gentleman of many noble qualities," replied Raleigh.

"I tell thee, out of friendship, he doth affect thee not at all," said his lordship, in the same low voice.

"Then hath some villain slandered me to him," observed his companion, quickly; "for, although he hath his faults—as who hath not?—I do believe him to be of a right honorable nature."

"I have ofttimes heard him speak slightingly of thee, Sir Walter—by this hand have I," continued his lordship, with increased emphasis, yet still in a subdued tone.

"Thou must have mistaken his meaning, surely," responded the other, "I have done him no offence. But he may speak slightingly of me without disparagement, my good lord, for possibly I may not have done sufficient to deserve his eulogy."

"I tell thee, in friendship and in secresy, noble Raleigh—for it be dangerous to say anything against one so high in favor—that he hath disparaged thee villanously, ever since thy quarrel with that ruffianly follower of his, Sir Roger Williams."

"Ha!" exclaimed Sir Walter, turning round quickly, and looking his companion full in the face.

"Thou hast done *too much* to please him, noble Raleigh: thy gallant actions are ever before his eyes—thy well-deserved praises are continually ringing in his ears. He must make comparisons; and whenever he doth compare himself

with thee, either in appearance, in wisdom, or in honorable deeds, he findeth himself at a disadvantage; and that doth fret him hugely. Thou knowest he is proud—and that proud men are vain—and that vain men are apt to undervalue the qualities they do not themselves possess. Marvel not, therefore, that he doth not appreciate thee according to thy exceeding merits. I tell thee this, out of my infinite love for thee, wishing to put thee on thy guard."

"I am much beholden to thee for thy consideration," replied Sir Walter, as if musing upon what he had heard; "and yet he hath always been, to all appearance, most friendly disposed toward me."

"To all appearance, I grant," added his lordship, dwelling in a marked manner upon the words; "but thou mayest rely upon what I have stated. Use it as it pleaseth thee, noble Raleigh; but well convinced am I, that what I have said out of affection, thou wilt employ after such a fashion as may not be likely to do me an injury."

"Depend on it, thy interests shall be well cared for," responded Sir Walter.

The preceding conversation continued while the parties proceeded along sundry passages and through various suites of rooms magnificently furnished, and crowded with courtiers and others strolling about or discoursing of the news one with another. They at last advanced into a room adjoining the presence chamber—a noble apartment hung round with costly tapestry, and strewed with fresh rushes, into which came thronging the archbishops and bishops, ambassadors, nobles, counsellors of state, and others of the mighty of the land. Presently it was whispered that the queen was a-coming, and thereupon way was made for her majesty, just as the gentlemen pensioners with their gilt battle-axes and richly embroidered vests were observed approaching. After these went certain noblemen of the queen's household, knights of the garter, and the officers of her council walking in their costly robes bareheaded—among whom was the chancellor bearing the seals in a red silk purse—having on one side of him an officer of state carrying the royal sceptre, and on the other another of the like rank bearing the sword of state with the point upward, in a scabbard of crimson velvet plentifully studded with golden *fleurs-de-lis*.

Next came our sovereign lady Queen Elizabeth, very majestic in her deportment, and although getting into the decline of life, still very pleasant to look upon; for her face if it was a little wrinkled was fair; her eyes small and lively; her nose somewhat aquiline; and her lips though thin were continually adorned with a gracious smile. She wore much false hair of a red hue—a color she greatly affected, and upon her head a small crown of a very precious gold richly worked. In her ears were rare pearls with pendents of exceeding value; and on her bosom, which, in consequence of her dress being worn low, was much exposed, was a necklace of jewels of an excellent fine water, with an oblong collar of gold and precious stones above; she was attired in white silk daintily bordered with pearls remarkable for their size and beauty, over which was a mantle of black silk shot with silver threads; having a train of marvellous length and of a corresponding costly material, borne by divers of the ladies of her court. As she advanced every head was uncovered, and those nearest to her did kneel on one knee, some of whom who had letters to deliver she raised and spoke to graciously, and as a mark of particular favor to one Bohemian baron, who had come to present certain credentials, she did pull off her glove and gave him her right hand to kiss, all sparkling with jewelled rings.

Thus she proceeded in all this beautiful magnificence, winning the hearts of her dutiful subjects by her very gracious condescension, and speaking to many foreigners with the same notable courtesy in French, Italian, Spanish, or Dutch, as it might happen, to their infinite wonder and delight; followed by a beautiful throng of the ladies of her court, each handsomely attired, though mostly in white, with the addition of some display of jewellery: and a guard of gentlemen pensioners like that which preceded them, till she entered the presence chamber to give audience to those ambassadors and ministers who had come on pressing business.

CHAPTER IV.

But if in living colors and right hue
Thyself thou covet to see pictured,
Who can it do more lively or more true
Than that sweet verse with nectar sprinkled;
In which a gracious servant pictured
His Cynthia, his Heaven's fairest light?
That with his melting sweetness ravished,

And with the wonder of her beames bright,
My senses lulled are in slumbers of delight.
SPENSER.

I marle what pleasure or felicity they have in taking this roguish tobacco. It's good for nothing but to choke a man, and fill him full of smoke and embers: there were four died out of one house last week with taking of it, and two more the bell went for yesternight; one of them they say will never scape it, he voided a bushel of soot yesterday upward and downward. BEN JONSON.

THE queen of England having retired from the presence chamber, sat in her withdrawing-room on a well-carved chair, having cushions covered with crimson velvet, whereon the royal arms were embroidered in gold, resting her feet upon a footstool of a like material—and around her were the select companions of her privacy. Instead of her crown, she now wore a pyramidal head-dress built of wire, lace, ribands, and jewels. The chamber was of handsome proportions, hung with costly tapestry, on which was very fairly depicted the principal events in the Iliad, and besides such necessary furniture as chairs, tables, and cabinets elaborately chiselled into every kind of cunning device, the panels of the richly-decorated wainscot did contain full-length portraits of the late king's highness of glorious memory, Henry the Eighth, with his illustrious consort Anna Boleyn, in dark ebony frames, and done to the life with all the limner's skill.

The whole party seemed to be in an excellent good humor, especially her majesty, who led the example by laughing loud and long, as she sat before two open glass doors that looked into a garden daintily laid out in long shady walks, while leaning upon the edge of the door, almost outside of the room as it were, stood Sir Walter Raleigh, against whom, evidently, all the mirth was directed; who, with a grave countenance continually disturbed by the merriment of his associates, in which he ever and anon joined right heartily, kept smoking a long pipe, and watching the fumes as he puffed them into the air.

"Ah, thou hast small cause to look after the fumes, for thou wilt be in a fine fume thyself presently," said her majesty, and the courtiers and the ladies thereat did laugh more than ever.

"Please your majesty," replied Sir Walter, taking the pipe from his mouth, and laughing with the rest—"My fumes are perfumes; and if ever I exhibit any other fumes in your majesty's gracious presence, I should be deserving of banishment, which would make me in a fume indeed."

"Thou wilt lose thy wager, Sir Walter Raleigh—which will put thy pipe out, depend on't," added the queen—at which witty conceit the courtiers were again in raptures.

"My pipe will be out anon, please your majesty," responded Sir Walter in the same jocose spirit. "But I shall have the honor of winning a purse of gold of the most bountiful sovereign that subject ever had."

"Odds bodikins, man, thou art mad, sure!" exclaimed the queen good humoredly. "How canst expect to win such a mad wager—unless peradventure thou seekest to amuse thyself by playing upon us some trick—which if thou dost, by our halidom, thou shalt smoke for it in right earnest." Thereupon the laugh went round as before, and all in audible whispers did commend her majesty's wit most liberally.

"Nay, I should be unworthy to breathe in so estimable a presence were I to make so bold," replied Raleigh gravely. "And for fear that your majesty should misunderstand my meaning, I will recal the terms of the wager—in the doing of which this noble company will correct me if I say anything in error. Your majesty, out of your gracious condescension, hath wagered me a purse of gold against my Barbary courser, that from a certain quantity of this precious tobacco that I have before all these honorable persons weighed and put into my pipe to smoke, I shall not be able to tell the exact weight of the smoke that escapes."

"Why, thou foolish gull, how canst tell the weight of anything that escapes?" asked the queen with a merry, malicious glance, and to the infinite amusement of her circle. "Canst catch the smoke after it hath mingled with the air, and press it into thy scales! We did think that thou hadst more wit than to undertake such a thing, and when thou first spoke of it, fancying thou wert taking the traveller's privilege, we laid this wager with thee on purpose to have a laugh at thy expense. O' my faith thy Barbary courser is as good as lost; but though it be taking but a barbarous advantage of thee, we must e'en accept of it."

"Please your majesty, perhaps he hath the wonderful seven-league boots, and meaneth quickly to overtake his smoke," observed a very lovely young gentlewoman who stood by the side of the queen's chair.

"Nay, Lady Blanche Somerset," replied her majesty, joining in the general

laugh, "he must be a bird if he means to come up with it, for smoke hath the property to ascend, as thou seest."

"Methinks Sir Walter be nothing else but a bird," said Mistress Alice, with an exceeding grave face.

"Why so, child?" asked the queen.

"Doth not your majesty perceive he hath a very owl-like look?" added her attendant archly, to the manifest increase of the mirth of the company, the which Sir Walter regarded only as if he had more to laugh at than they.

"I do perceive something in this more than meets your majesty's eye," remarked a very old courtier, with an exquisitely solemn foolish physiognomy.

"Speak out, my Lord Bumble," cried her majesty.

"I hold it as most comfortable Christian doctrine, please your majesty," said his lordship, advancing a little way on his gold-headed cane—for he stooped much, "that the mouth was made for the accommodation of honest victuals; and though I have lived in the reigns of your majesty's father Henry VIII., of pious, chaste, and glorious memory, and of his most excellent highness Edward VI., who surely hath a throne in heaven; and of our late illustrious Queen Mary, who was of a most princely disposition, as it becometh a queen to have, and which your majesty doth possess to an extent far beyond that which was exhibited by your majesty's predecessors, I never saw a gentleman, and, to speak the exact truth, I may add, any person of any degree whatsoever, who used his throat to imbibe villanous smoke; and therefore I hold it as most comfortable Christian doctrine that the mouth was made for the accommodation of honest victuals. Moreover, I never heard of any one with whom it was customary to make a smoke-jack of himself, but one, and he did do it not from liking, but from necessity."

"And who was he, my lord?" inquired the queen.

"Please your majesty, it was no other than the devil—from whose machinations be your majesty ever carefully guarded."

"Amen, my lord," said the queen, gravely.

"Who, as the learned Dr. Thumpcushion hath stated," added Lord Bumble, "continually doth vomit smoke and brimstone—doubtless, much after the same fashion as yonder honorable gentleman, the captain of your majesty's guard—therefore I hold it as most comfortable Christian doctrine"—

"Never mind the doctrine, my lord"—here put in the queen rather impatiently, while Sir Walter, with much ado, endeavored to preserve a serious countenance—"Say at once what thou perceivest in this matter, that our poor wits are not master of."

"I will come to the point without further preamble, since it be your majesty's excellent pleasure," said the old courtier, "though I was going to say, that a thing which looketh so unnatural and so devilish, can be practised for no other end but to ensnare our souls and blind our eyes, that we may be the more easily caught and thrust into the bottomless pit, where it be the fashion of Satan and all his imps to smoke, and to teach others to smoke, like unto the manner of yonder estimable gentleman, Sir Walter Raleigh; therefore, I hold it as most comfortable Christian doctrine, that the mouth hath been made for the accommodation of honest victuals."

"We have heard that before, my lord, so if thou meanest to enlighten us no further on this matter, hold thy peace, and Heaven will reward thee for it."

"Yes, Heaven will reward me, certainly, as your majesty hath so piously remarked," continued Lord Bumble; who, in addition to other infirmities consequent on old age, was exceeding deaf—"I am much bound to your majesty for your majesty's gracious consideration of my long service, and if your majesty doth not, Heaven will reward me, certainly. But I must say, of all your majesty's glorious family, none have I served with half the infinite satisfaction I find in attending on your majesty—though his excellent highness, Henry VIII., whose page I was, did say that I was inestimable before bedtime."

"Ah, thou didst doubtless make a most admirable sleeping potion," observed her majesty.

"As your majesty is pleased to say, he did justly appreciate my devotion," proceeded his lordship. "But I am fearful I am somewhat wandering from the point."

"Thou has found tnat out at last—a plagu[illegible]on thy tediousness!" exclaimed his royal mistress, angrily; but in a low voice.

"I have already stated enough to satisfy any reasonable personage that smoking is but a devilish pastime, and therefore not to be tolerated—but there is more mischief in it yet. I say it be unlawful and infinitely dangerous. For let it be

observed that smoke is black—which is likewise the color the devil most affects—therefore to be avoided; that the accomplishment of smoking is an art—and the art being black, it standeth to reason it must be a black art—and I do uphold that the exercise of the black art in your majesty's presence is heathenish, treacherous, and abominable, and, consequently, that yonder noble gentleman, the captain of your majesty's guard, ought not to be allowed, as is evidently his intention, to bewitch your majesty and overthrow the state."

"Sir Walter Raleigh, dost hear that weighty accusation?" asked the queen, the frown of impatience upon her face now giving way to an undisguised smile; "Hast thou had the audacity to practise the black art before us? hast the presumption to attempt to bewitch us and overthrow the state?"

"Without attempting any defence, I will, at once throw myself upon your majesty's clemency, of which I have had such excellent experience," replied Sir Walter—refraining awhile from his pipe. "But perhaps I may be allowed to observe, that if I have attempted to bewitch your majesty, I have followed the example of one who, with her admirable qualities, hath bewitched all her loving subjects."

"There! he confesseth it, please your majesty," cried the old courtier, pressing close to the queen, "therefore I do hold it very comfortable Christian doctrine"——

"Peace, fool!" cried her majesty, in a voice that not only made Lord Bumble hear, but astonished him so, that it sent him staggering two or three paces backward upon the delicate toes of some of the maids of honor; who, not liking so impressive a salutation, with features expressive of pain and anger, pushed him rudely out of the way, till he found himself beyond the circle, scarcely able to breathe, and in a complete consternation.

"I do not believe that he practiseth the black art," here observed Mistress Alice, who was somewhat of a favorite with the queen, for her lively temper, and, more than all, because she never seemed desirous of attracting the admiration of the noblemen and gentlemen of the court; "Indeed, I will do him the justice to say that I think him no conjuror."

The queen laughed, and, as matter of course, the courtiers laughed also.

"Nay, be not so hard upon him, child," said her majesty, "remember he will have to lose his Barbary courser, which will sufficiently punish him for endeavoring to cajole the queen of England."

"May it please your majesty," said Sir Walter Raleigh, coming into the room with his pipe in his hand, "I have smoked out the quantity of tobacco agreed upon."

"Haste thee and weigh the smoke, then," replied the queen, with a chuckle of delight, which was echoed by those around her.

"I will tell your majesty the weight of the smoke in a few seconds," responded Raleigh, taking in his hand a small pair of ivory scales which stood on an adjoining table.

"Thou wilt never get so much smoke into such tiny balances, Sir Walter Raleigh," observed her majesty with the same tone, "so thou mayest as well acknowledge that the wager is ours."

"Your majesty will be pleased to observe that the weight in this scale is the exact weight of the ashes left in the pipe," replied Sir Walter, showing the scales, in one of which he had put the ashes, at an even balance. "Now, if your majesty will graciously remember the weight of the unburnt tobacco upon which the experiment was made, by subtracting from it the weight of the ashes, which I have here ascertained, the sum produced will be the exact weight of the smoke."

Sir Walter Raleigh, with the scales still in his hand, wore on his noble features, at this moment, an expression of very evident satisfaction, as he turned round and looked down upon his audience—some of whom seemed incredulous, others wondering, the rest puzzled what to think; but all were waiting in silence the effect of his announcement upon their sovereign, whose abler understanding perceived at once the accuracy of the result, though it was so different from what she had expected, and felt as if she could not enough admire the simplicity of the method which had so easily proved what she thought had been impossible.

"The gold is thine, Sir Walter Raleigh," said she, rising from her chair with a dignity none knew better how to put on, as she placed a well-filled purse in his hand, "and fairly is it won. There have been many laborers in the fire whose vast undertaking have ended in smoke; but thou art the first whose smoke was ever turned into gold."

"Well, I did not think he was such a

superlative master of hocus pocus," exclaimed Mistress Alice, with a wonderful elevation of her eyebrows. "Please your majesty, if you let him go on at this profitable rate, every conjurer in your dominions will hang himself in despair."

"Indeed, 'tis a very pretty piece of conjuration," said Lady Blanche Somerset, opening her large blue eyes in a seeming astonishment; and all the rest, though they did in no way understand the matter, did rival each other in ready praise of Sir Walter Raleigh—except my Lord Bumble, who kept aloof, as if he had not yet recovered from his fright and surprise.

Sir Walter having put away the things he was using, placed his hand on his heart, and kneeling on one knee before her majesty, as she presented him the purse, said humbly, "I pray your majesty to pardon me, that the deep gratitude of my heart at this moment, at receiving such munificent and generous conduct from my sovereign, hath taken from my poor tongue all adequate expression. What Paris must have felt when he first beheld the beauteous Helen, I experience at witnessing such graces of behavior—with the like of which was no princess ever blessed—therefore, if I make not too bold, I would implore your majesty, out of your right royal and princely disposition, and most admirable wisdom, to frame, in my behalf, such excuse for my silence as your majesty may think appropriate."

"Rise, Sir Walter Raleigh," said the queen, graciously raising him from the ground; for, in truth, though waxing old, she did find exceeding delight in having such handsome gallants at her feet. "The wager was honorably won—therefore our bestowing it doth call for no gratitude. We are now disposed for a stroll through yonder pleasant walks, and require thy attendance." So saying, she led the way, with a becoming stateliness, through the glass doors, and stepped out into the garden, closely followed by her captain of the guard—the rest staying behind, as they had not been invited. After some little time passed in the queen's garden, her majesty proceeded through divers passages, and through the new gallery in the palace, till she reached St. James's Park.

"Hath Master Edmund Spenser, our poet laureate, of whom thou hast so oft spoke to us so fair, been well cared for, since at thy request we granted him an interview?" inquired her majesty, as they walked along.

"I believe that my Lord Burghley never did anything for him, or paid him his salary, please your majesty," replied Sir Walter. "But I marvel not at that, seeing that my lord treasurer hath not seemed in any great degree affected toward the inestimable sweet delights of poetry and philosophy; and yet one would naturally suppose, that serving a mistress who hath so perfect a knowledge and so exquisite a taste in those divine enjoyments—the very Minerva of our thrice fortunate English land—he would have imbibed sufficient inclination toward them as to foster such as possess them most—for the true glorification of his illustrious sovereign, and to the great advancement of his own honor."

"Ah, my Lord Burghley is certainly somewhat deficient in such matters; nevertheless he is an excellent statesman and a faithful servant," observed the queen. "We will, however, not allow Master Spenser to think himself unesteemed of us, for we remember well he did read to us divers passages from a poem called 'The Fairy Queen,' of which we entertain a very favorable consideration."

"Your majesty playeth ever the part of the true judge of merit, and its most liberal patroness," exclaimed Raleigh, "and happy are those poetic spirits who were born to flourish under such excellent auspices. Surely they might aptly be addressed in the words of Lucan to his Pharsalia,

Vos quoque, qui fortes animos belloque peremptos
Laudibus in longum, vates, diffunditis ævum,
Plurima securi fudistis carmina Bardi.

It has been left for your majesty's right glorious reign to produce two such unrivalled geniuses as Master Edmund Spenser and Master William Shakspeare—the one as an epic poet, who writeth to advance the admiration of that which is chivalrous and noble, hath no peer; the other as an inventor of plays—the which in this country he may justly be said to be the originator—for judgment, wit, imagination, and knowledge of human nature standeth above all in these realms. Master Spenser hath fellowship with such noble spirits as Homer and Virgil, and Master Shakspeare deserveth to stand on equal terms with Sophocles and Menander."

"We take great delight in the productions of this Shakspeare as exhibited at the playhouse," replied her majesty, "and

do intend this afternoon to partake of the same amusement."

"It is an entertainment worthy of your majesty's enjoyment," responded Sir Walter, "for I take it that players are a sort of looking-glasses, who show humanity under all its fashions, as it is made to appear by the dramatist, to whom these fashions are familiar; and they who essay to know the world, its conduct and apparelling, will find no more direct way than the playhouse, where Master Shakspeare and some few who travel in his footsteps are in requisition. Nor are your majesty's players undeserving of laudable mention; for, without tuition or previous example, they have raised the art, from little better than absolute vagrancy, to a profession honorable with the court, and in good esteem with the people."

"Ah—there is one Burbage, is there not, of notable excellence in this art?" inquired the queen. "We have marked him oft. He that playeth the crook-backed king."

"The same, please your majesty," said Raleigh, "which showeth your majesty's exquisite discrimination, for he beareth away the palm from them all; being of an exceeding ingenious nature, and of a very happy facility in taking upon himself the characters of others; which he showeth not only when appearing as Richard the Third, though it be a most superlative piece of acting, as your majesty hath justly conceived, but in divers other parts in which he hath exhibited a similar excellence."

They walked on for some two or three minutes without saying ever a word.

"Rememberest thou those lines of Virgil," asked her majesty, "beginning:—

Fortunate senex! hic inter flumina nota
Et fontes sacros"?

"How could I fail, please your majesty?" replied Sir Walter, seeing that they form one of the sweetest pieces of pastoral ever written by that truly famous poet, who hath for his epitaph:—

Mantua me genuit, Calabri rapuere, tenet nunc
Parthenope, cecini pascua, rura, duces."

"If our judgment do not fail, they are most happily chosen," continued the queen. "How well he describeth the cool deliciousness of that pleasant place, out of the scorching heat of the sun, where the bees suck the dainty flowers, while the cooing of the dove and the plaint of the turtle are hushed, that the sojourner therein might be wooed to repose."

"Indeed, it is a marvellous refreshing landscape, and your majesty doth show that inimitable appreciation of its excellence, which hath delighted me so oft when discoursing upon other of the ancient writers, either Greek or Latin."

"There is another picture, which maketh a fine contrast to the foregoing," said her majesty, who did mightily delight to show her learning, of which she was very bountifully gifted; and more especially took great pleasure in receiving the praises of so fine a scholar as her captain of the guard: "it is given in Theocritus his Idyls, and commenceth:—

Ἐν τε βαθειαις,
Αδείας σχίνοιο χαμευνίσιν ἐκλίνθημες,
Εν τε νεοτμάτοισι γεγαθότες οιναρέοισι.

and so goeth on at considerable length."

"I remember me," replied Sir Walter, "where the poet describeth the luxurious indolence of reclining on the soft branches of the vine and the lentisk; while above, the foliage of poplars and elms spreads a most grateful shade, and the murmuring stream flowing below gives coolness to the air; shrill grasshoppers are chiruping pleasantly in the green sward; the sweet honey-sucking bees are humming amid the fragrant blossoms; Philomel, pouring out her melancholy song, concealed in the grove; and the turtle-dove, cooing dulcetly, doth add a softer music to the tuneful pipe of the small birds; as, to charm the eye equally with the ear, the luscious fruits of summer and autumn are heaped all about, showing piles of rosy-cheeked apples and pears, and the branches of the velvet plum, overloaded, bending to the ground. In truth, 'tis a most enticing picture; and the reference to it is another instance of your majesty's unrivalled familiarity with the treasures of classic song, and of that miraculous fine taste which preferreth what is most admirable, that giveth me such frequent cause of infinite wonder and delight."

The queen did look exceeding pleased at this discourse, fanning herself all the time very prettily as she walked along, and regarding the noble form and handsome attire of the speaker with an eye of favor; till coming to a place where, beneath the shade of a wide-spreading beech, just where the walk, screened on the side by a thick fence of hawthorn, took a sudden turn that shut them out from view, a commodious seat was placed, and her majesty did rest herself

thereon. She then, more at leisure, did scan the rich habiliments of the gallant Sir Walter Raleigh, as he stood before her, which seemed to give her ample satisfaction, though she said never a word; he gazing upon her all the while with a wonderful show of respectful admiration, as much as to say, that if his tongue dared speak his thoughts, his heart would make them right eloquent.

"What sayest thou concerning the voyage thou wert speaking of?" at last she inquired in her most gracious tone.

Starting suddenly, as if recovering from a trance, he replied, "I humbly pray your majesty's pardon; for indeed 'tis a most notable truth, that none but the eagle can gaze on the sun without being dazzled."

Her majesty did infinitely relish such conceits; and her eyes twinkled with an evident pleasure as she observed her attendant suddenly let fall his looks to the ground, as if the gazing upon her were too much for his humanity.

"But of the voyage I will speak," continued he. "May it be known to your majesty, that there are certain of my former companions in arms, with other valiant gentlemen, who are desirous of serving your majesty, and of giving free scope to their courageous spirits by doing damage against the Spaniard, have clubbed with me divers large sums of money, for the purpose of procuring a sufficiency of well-appointed ships for an expedition against Panama, combined with an intention of intercepting the Plate fleet, the riches whereof is almost incredible. They have funds enough for thirteen ships-of-war, of the which, in consideration that I have sunk the whole of my private fortune in the scheme, and that they do—doubtless without proper judgment—acknowledge me to be the properest man among them for seamanship, acquaintance with the Spaniards, and knowledge of the art of war, seek me for to be their admiral, which, if it be the good pleasure of your majesty, whose poor soldier I am, I am in no wise unwilling to be: but to make the consequence we seek the more sure, I would humbly pray of your majesty such assistance in men, money, and ships, as would put all thought of misadventure out of the question, the granting of the which, I feel assured, would tend greatly to the complete crippling of your most notorious enemies, the addition of abundance of glory to your reign, and the vast enrichment of your exchequer."

"Thou speakest us fair, Sir Walter Raleigh," said the queen, who had paid very strict attention to what he had advanced; but however partial she might be upon occasion, she was rarely to be drawn away from a consideration of her own advantage. "Thou speakest us fair; and were we not as well acquainted with thee as we are, having recollection of services done by thee against the boasted armada, which, by God's good help, we utterly discomfited, and at other times against those empty praters and wretched villains the Spaniards—and remembering also thy skill in discovering strange lands, do put some confidence in thy assertions; nevertheless, it is necessary we be informed what share of the spoil shall be ours in case we afford such assistance as thou requirest?"

Sir Walter, in no way disconcerted at this, as he knew her majesty's disposition, answered, with a very becoming humility: "Far be it from me to endeavor to make a bargain with my sovereign; but your majesty's condescension is so great, and your liberality I have experienced in so bountiful a measure, I am emboldened to say, that according to the amount of the service rendered shall your majesty partake of the treasures gained."

"How many ships dost require?" asked the queen.

"As many as your majesty can generously assist us with," replied Sir Walter.

"If we allow thee half a dozen, properly equipped and provided for with all the munitions of war, we shall expect to share one half of the spoil."

"Your majesty's generosity exceeds my expectations," exclaimed Raleigh, though, if the truth be told, he did feel a little put out at the unfairness of the bargain.

"Then, if those conditions be accepted, we do appoint thee admiral of the fleet," continued the queen, "and will see that thou hast proper warrant for it, with power to officer thine own ships as it pleaseth thee—reserving to ourself the right of appointing a vice-admiral, to officer our ships as we think proper."

"Never had servant so bounteous a mistress!" cried Sir Walter, as he knelt at the feet of the queen, seemingly in a transport of gratitude. "In truth, if I am not allowed to pour out the overflowings of my most grateful spirit, I must be dumb ever after. Oh, where shall the most passionate lover that ever sought to

do noble deeds in honor of her whom he served, find such absolute cause for the impelling of his valor as that which moveth me? Had Arthur and all his right famous Knights of the Round Table lived in these more fortunate days, to have beheld the peerless Elizabeth, what chivalrous doings would have been enacted, that are lost to the world! But then how much have I reason to congratulate myself that I, who am nothing except in the eyes of the divine Parthenia, whom it is my happiness to serve—the very sovereign of beauty and queen of my heart's best affections, should not only live in the time which her existence hath made glorious, but should be allowed to breathe in her presence and bask in the imperial sunshine of her eyes—nay, honor never to be too highly prized," continued he with more vehemence, taking her hand, as he observed that the stateliness of the queen was sinking before the vanity of the woman, "that out of her exceeding condescension and wonderful goodness, she sometimes enricheth my soul with her most moving smiles, and vouchsafest me the supreme happiness of pressing my lips upon her ivory hand."

"Nay, Sir Walter, thou wilt devour it sure!" exclaimed the queen, coyly attempting to withdraw her hand, which he then impressed with a hundred eager caresses: but she was too well pleased with the action, and too much delighted in seeing so noble a gentleman at her feet, to use any great degree of force, and the hand continued to be caressed as passionately as at first.

"Oh, might I but be allowed to ask one favor—one sweet—one precious favor!" said Raleigh, gazing in her face with as much apparent rapture as if she had been a young and blooming Hebe, instead of much nearer resembling a superannuated Diana of some sixty years or so. The queen kept her peace, looking very bashful, not knowing but something might be required of her it would be scarcely proper for her virgin modesty to grant; when Sir Walter continued—"When I am doing furious battle with the enemy, I know of nothing which would so much strengthen my resolution, and afford me consolation in all the delays I may meet with in my scarcely endurable absence from my absolute and incomparable Angelica, as a lock of that golden hair, which to me seemeth brighter than are the beams of Phœbus topping the eastern hills: deign, then, to satisfy your majesty's humble and truly devoted slave, and pardon the deep yet most respectful adoration that doth seek so invaluable a gift."

"In very truth, Sir Walter, if thou seekest only so simple a thing of us, we see no harm in its disposal," replied her majesty very graciously. "Therefore set thy mind at ease. Thou shalt have it by a trusty messenger before thou leavest our shores."

"Ah!" exclaimed he with a passionate look, as he pressed the hand he held to his heart—"your majesty's unexampled goodness hath already made my poor heart bankrupt in thanks."

"Hush!" cried the queen, suddenly snatching away her hand and putting her finger to her lip. "Who are these that dare to intrude upon our privacy?"

Just at that moment footsteps were heard approaching along the walk on the other side of the fence, and voices of two persons in conversation were distinguished. They spoke low, but the words "Raleigh," "Elizabeth," and "intrigue," were distinctly audible.

"Now, by God's wounds, we'll not suffer this!" exclaimed the queen, starting up with a face crimsoned with rage. "Arrest them, Sir Walter Raleigh, whoever they be."

"Let me entreat of your majesty"—

"What, are we not obeyed?" cried the queen quickly, interrupting him, and casting on him a look of terrible menace when she observed that he hesitated to obey her command.

"On the knees of my heart, let a faithful servant"—

"Away, traitor!" fiercely exclaimed her majesty to her kneeling favorite, as she brushed by him; and with haughty steps strode toward the turning in the walk which would give her a view of the spot whence the sounds had proceeded: but behold! when she had there arrived, no person was visible—at which she marvelled greatly. She looked among the trees, but could see nothing; and much chafed thereat, returned to where she had left Sir Walter, as it may be said with considerable show of truth, trembling in his shoes at the imminent peril of his situation; but he knew the character of his mistress thoroughly, and his alarm soon giving way, set him upon putting forward a stroke of policy which should reawaken all the influence he had lost; so that when her majesty came back to the place she had left, sweeping along, frowning majestically, and with a mind filled with thoughts of inflicting the most complete

disgrace upon her captain of the guard, beheld a sight so piteous, that all the dread sovereign did give place to the sympathizing woman—for there knelt Sir Walter Raleigh exactly where he had before kneeled, as if he was chained unto the spot, gazing upon vacancy with a look so despairing and wo-begone, that it would have melted a heart of adamant. To her exceeding astonishment, he noticed not her appearance before him—albeit he saw her well enough—but continued with a fixed and glassy gaze to stare into the empty air, like unto one utterly bereft of reason; and being moved with pity to behold so gallant a man, and one withal who was the best dressed gentleman in all her court, in so sorry a plight, she presently went up to him and placed her hand upon his shoulder, saying kindly, "Sir Walter, what aileth thee?" whereupon, with a long-drawn sigh that seemed to come from the very bottom of his heart, he lifted up his eyes to her face, and then, as if struck with a sudden recollection, he sunk down his head, and did hide his face in his palms, with a groan so hollow and sepulchral, that her majesty thought he was about to give up the ghost.

"Nay, nay, take not on so, take not on so, Sir Walter; we mean thee no harm, be assured," said the queen, now in a very trepidation; which assurance was comfortable enough to her forlorn captain of the guard; but who, nevertheless, with a most pitiful accent exclaimed—

"Let me die at your majesty's feet, for I am unworthy to live, having angered so good a mistress."

"Odds pittikins, man, think not of dying," replied the queen in her most gracious tone.

"In sad truth, if I be deprived of the most delectable happiness of gazing on such exquisite perfection as hath so oft delighted mine eyes, I am utterly undone. I have no desire to live," continued he very movingly. At which the queen was not a whit displeased, for it is out of all contradiction, she had vanity enough to believe that the deprivation of the beholding her charms would produce so fatal an effect.

"Despair not,—and if we find that thou still deservest our esteem, thou shalt have no cause for fear," said her majesty in a manner she thought likely to put him into some hope. "Rise, Sir Walter Raleigh, and return with us to the palace—we will inquire into this matter."

"I am rooted to the earth," replied he, in the most sorrowful voice that ever was heard. "The fear of your majesty's displeasure hath fixed me to the ground. I have no power to move. How much would those wretched traitors rejoice, who, to get me into disgrace, envying me your majesty's good opinion, that I prize as Jason did his Medea, and which, as she taught him to tame the brazen-footed bulls, and cast asleep the watchful dragon that guarded the golden fleece, hath inspired me to like honorable and famous deeds,—to witness the very piteous strait to which I am reduced by the effect of their contemptible trick to slander the most excellent, chaste, and beauteous princess that ever did adorn this sublunary world."

"Dost think 'twas a trick?" inquired she earnestly.

"How could it be else, please your majesty?" replied Sir Walter, albeit he knew all the time, having, from a better sense of hearing, heard more than the queen, that the conversation alluded to his amour with Mistress Elizabeth Throckmorton, though he could not distinguish to whom the voices belonged; but seeing that her majesty fancied that it was in allusion to her, was resolved to take advantage of that mistake. "Is not your majesty well known, with all the superlative accomplishments of the nine immortal daughters of Jupiter and Mnemosyne, to unite with them the exquisite truth and modesty of the goddess Veritas and the Vestals—and how could those villanous traducers, whoever they be, give utterance to so notorious a calumny, unless it were that I should reap disadvantage thereby; but, relying on your majesty's noble qualities and proper sense of what is due to your own dignity, I feel convinced that the paltry trick will be regarded with the contempt it doth deserve—only awaiting your majesty's pardon, without which I am naught, to release me from this right painful and unhappy posture."

"Rise, Sir Walter Raleigh—thy pardon is granted thee, and there is our hand upon it," said the queen, in her most gracious manner giving him her hand, the which he did again press to his lips, but in a style more respectful than before. "We'll think no more of these paltry tricksters—but will show them how little we can be affected by their villanous yet most contemptible slanders." Then did she very kindly raise him from the ground, and return to the withdrawing-room conversing with him all the way

on matters relating to his projected voyage in a way, the friendliness whereof, he had rarely experienced.

CHAPTER V.

Ambition is a vulture vile
That feedeth on the heart of pride,
And finds no rest when all is tried;
For worlds can not confine the one,
The other lists and bounds hath none:
And both subvert the mind, the state,
Procure destruction, envy, hate.
DANIEL.

Against bad tongues goodness can not defend her
Those be most free from faults they least will spare,
But prate of them whom they have scantly known,
Judging their humors to be like their own.
SIR JOHN HARRINGTON.

"My Lord of Essex, you may account me your true friend in this business," said a dwarfish and ill favored person soberly clad, to a handsome and gorgeously-dressed gallant—having remarkable dark eyes, and a rich glossy beard very full at the bottom—as they sat over against each other in a chamber hung round with abundance of ancient armor.

"I think I may, Sir Robert Cecil," replied he, addressed as the Earl of Essex, looking moodily all the time, as if there was something that mightily vexed him. "She hath quarrelled with me at primero, only because I did drop something that to her appeared to call in question her skill with the cards; and she hath spoke to me never a word since. 'Sblood! one had need be a beggar's dog as put up with such humors."

"Nay, but the queen is a most bounteous mistress," observed the other in a tone of apology; "and though at times she be easily displeased, yet is she quickly moved to make amends if undeserved disadvantage come of it."

"But she is too prone to such capriciousness, and I'll stomach it no longer," exclaimed his companion, his brilliant eyes flashing very haughtily as he kept playing with the jewelled pommel of his dagger. "What! shall it be said that the Lord Essex is fit for nothing better than to play the pet falcon with, to be whistled to, and driven off, as it suiteth a woman's idle fantasies?"

"Fie on you, my lord!" cried Cecil, with an exceeding grave countenance. "I would not the queen should hear of this for as much as your earldom."

"Let her—I care not;" said the Lord Essex sharply.

"Now, look you there, was ever obstinate man so bent on his own destruction?" exclaimeth the other. "But I will do you a service as far as my poor ability goeth; for sure am I, that you have no friend so earnest to advance your interests as Robert Cecil, if you will only look upon him as such."

"I thank you heartily," replied his companion; but in no way relaxing the frown that had settled on his brows.

"Nay, I seek no thanks," rejoined Sir Robert, "for, inasmuch as my honored father hath been your guardian—to say naught of the noble qualities I do behold in you—have I ever felt disposed to do you a service. Believe me, I would do good for the good's sake. Now, my lord, in this matter, be advised by me; for though seek I in no way to push forth my judgment before one that is so ripe as your own, yet, as your lordship is somewhat apt to get heated at these things, being touched by them more nearly than another, I, having more coolness, which is the greatest help to reflection, may be considered better qualified to form an unbiased opinion; therefore, I do beseech you, in all true friendship, be advised of me."

"What counsel you, Sir Robert Cecil?" inquired his lordship.

"Mark you Sir Walter Raleigh?" asked the other.

"What hath he to do with it?" said my Lord Essex, very proudly.

"Truly he is a noble gentleman," replied his companion; "he is one that hath many commendable parts, being in outward show right manly to look upon; the which he doth put to great advantage, by apparelling himself very daintily. Indeed, though I be no judge of these things, I have heard it said by others, that for the fashioning of a doublet, he hath not his peer. For mine own part, I envy him not such an accomplishment, thinking that it more becometh a tailor than a gentleman. Nevertheless he is doubtless to be praised for it, seeing that it showeth his great anxiety to please her majesty, who, it is well known to him, taketh exceeding delight in beholding such braveries; the which he continually turneth to his profit. But he hath other gifts that do the more recommend him to the queen's favor; he hath held himself valiantly in the wars, and hath the reputation of the most experienced soldier in the queen's service; though I for one do think there be his betters not far off. Then—so it be said, though I know not how true it be,—his knowledge of sea-

manship is inferior to none; which hath not only enabled him to exhibit his valor against the enemy with great effect; but hath given him marvellous facilities in the discovery of strange lands. Besides which, they that take upon themselves to know this phœnix, do give out that he is a very Solomon for wisdom, and is wonderfully quick at penning a stanza."

"And what hath all this to do with the matter?" haughtily inquired my Lord Essex, who, though he could not help admiring the character of Sir Walter Raleigh, liked not to hear of his praises so conspicuously.

"Much more, my good lord, than it doth appear to you," replied Cecil, in a tone, and with a manner of great meaning. "Mark me! I do not blame this valiant gentleman for wishing to make the most of his qualifications, for it is natural for a man to advance his fortunes as well as he can; but if he, standing upon the opinion some have of him, which in all honesty seemeth to me strangely overrated, seek to gain the first place at court, and poison the queen's ear against the absent"—

At this moment my lord of Essex, who had exhibited signs of great impatience during the speech of his companion—with his handsome countenance hugely disturbed—leaped suddenly upon his feet, and exclaimed—

"By God's wrath, if he hath slandered me, I'll make him rue it."

"Nay, I said not that, my good lord," observed the crafty Cecil, with a show of sincerity. "Indeed, far be it from me to give you so ill an opinion of one who, beyond all dispute, hath signalized himself very honorably; but your absence doth throw great temptation in his way.—I pray you be seated, my lord:—and there are some men—such is the perversity of human nature—who think it no discredit to them to build their rise by working at the fall of their betters.—I would you would not stand, my lord:—not that I think Sir Walter Raleigh is of such kind, but being the captain of the guard, in constant attendance on the queen, where he hath many opportunities to drop hints to your disadvantage, which in charity I do not think he would:—I would say, *perhaps* he might, as the only way of dispossessing you of that high seat in the queen's grace you so worthily fill, be induced to increase her majesty's displeasure against you as much as lay in his power. But be seated, I pray you, my lord."

"If he attempt it, were he twenty Sir Walter Raleighs, he should have his deserts," said the proud noble, evidently much disturbed by what he had heard; then, smiling contemptuously, added—"but he dare not," and quickly resumed his seat.

"There are we of the same opinion," observed Cecil, who, with an unmoved countenance, had all the time kept a careful scrutiny of the features of his companion. "When I consider that he is nothing better than a simple knight, while you, my good lord, are known to be connected with the powerfulest families in the kingdom, and even stand in some relationship to the queen's majesty, I do conceive that he hath more wit than to attempt such a mad scheme as the driving you away from the court, that he might supply your place; nevertheless, speaking from the love I bear you, I do advise that you keep with the queen as much as may be possible; thereby shall you hinder all foolish speculations of the kind, that may be built upon your absence, and notice for yourself whether this Sir Walter Raleigh be inclined to push himself forward at your expense, as some say; though for mine own part, I do not think of his disposition so badly, having, in all my intercourse with him, found him to be a gentleman of very excellent integrity. Allow me also to hope, that what my zeal for you hath emboldened me to say, you will not take in ill part, assuring you that, of all men living, is there not one I hold in so much respect as yourself."

"I am greatly beholden to you, and will think of your advice," replied my Lord Essex, rising, with considerable assumption of dignity, from his chair, as he began putting on his embroidered gloves, "but where is my Lord Burghley?"

"My father hath not long returned from the council," said his companion: "he is greatly fatigued, and hath gone to rest, desiring not to be disturbed. I pray you, my good lord, excuse seeing him to-day."

"In truth I have no particular business with him," said his lordship, carelessly, as he arranged a costly silk cloak he wore upon his shoulder; "commend me to him, Sir Robert, and, if it be not displeasing to you, I will see you again on this matter at a fitting hour."

"I shall feel proud of the honor you will do me, my good lord," replied Cecil, as with much show of respect he followed his visiter out of the door, when he

had put on his hat, which was of a high crown, with a precious jewel in the front; and made the serving men, some of whom were straggling about the hall, hasten to open the gates, where he kept bowing to my Lord Essex very courteously, who received his salutations with a haughty inclination of the head, before he moved away from Exeter House, to cross to the river where he had left his barge; and then the other came back, seemingly in a very thoughtful mood, to the armory, and fastened himself in.

He had sat himself down therein scarcely a minute, when he was aware of a gentle tapping at the wainscot; which as soon as he heard, a smile of peculiar meaning passed over his grave features, and going directly to a place where hung a suit of Saracen mail, he did presently open a concealed door, and there entered thereat Lord Henry Howard.

"Hast any news?" asked Sir Robert, eagerly.

"Indeed have I," said my lord.

"Good news?" inquired Cecil.

"Excellent good news," replied his companion.

"From the Scottish king, eh, my good lord?" said the other, in a whisper.

"No, i'faith—it hath not travelled so far: 'tis English news;—news of our incomparable captain of the guard."

"Ha! what, doth he seem inclined to take the bait, and quarrel with Essex?" inquired the other.

"I doubt it much," responded his companion; "I moved him a little, but not sufficient to ground any such hopes upon."

"Tis enough," exclaimed Cecil, "each is jealous of the other, and very small things will suffice to increase their mutual ill will. I have had Essex here, and have just succeeded in stirring up his ancient animosity against Raleigh, and I will take good heed it shall not go out for want of fuel. See you my object?"

"To ruin both in good time, I hope," said Lord Howard.

"True—but more immediately to play one against the other, that we may take advantage of their disunion; for were they strict friends, they would be too strong for us; or were either to be allowed to proceed in his course without molestation of a rival, he would soon have too firm a seat for us to shake him out. We will set them by the ears, and I doubt not we shall find our profit in it. But what news have you of Raleigh?"

"What think you of a dainty intrigue now with one of the maids of honor?"

"No!" cried the other, incredulously.

"Just ripe for a discovery—a private marriage about to take place, to hide the unwelcome consequences."

"To whom—where is she—what is her name?" hastily inquired Cecil, showing by the earnest expression of his countenance the interest he took in the intelligence.

"She is no other than the right modest daughter of old Sir Nicholas Throckmorton."

"The fool's ruined," exclaimed Sir Robert; "but how know you this—how can it be proved?"

"I was informed of it by my Lady Howard, of Walden," said the other. "Her ladyship, as it seemeth to me, having been slighted by this Raleigh—I know not why, for truly she is rather a dainty piece of goods to look upon—and suspecting from certain observations she had made, that he was the welcome lover of the virtuous Elizabeth, impelled by jealousy, did conceal herself in Mistress Throckmorton's chamber, and heard the whole of the precious secret; and now her indignant ladyship is burning to tell it to the queen."

"She must be stopped awhile—she will spoil all else," cried his companion, eagerly. "This is a delicate affair, my good lord, and requireth very careful handling, or else mischief will come of it."

"I thought it of consequence, and bade her stay the discovery till I had seen you on the subject, which she hath promised me. But the best of the jest is, while we were in earnest conversation on this very matter, along one of the walks in the park, the queen, who was on the other side of the fence near which we stood, without our knowledge of it, overheard us, as I suppose; for we presently recognised her voice very loud, calling upon Sir Walter Raleigh to arrest us; the which put us both in such a fright, that each of us did suddenly run for it as if our lives depended on our speed of foot. Never ran I half so fast in all my days; and as for my fair cousin—by this light, there never was such a racer. It would have done your heart good to have seen us, like two Spanish galeasses, cutting before the wind with all sail, to get out of the reach of an English frigate. Thanks to the fleetness of our heels, we escaped; but my Lady Howard hath got such a fright that she will scarce dare to open her

mouth before the queen for some time to come."

"So much the better," observed his companion, drily.

"I left her to calm herself at her leisure, and hastened through the private gate in the garden to seek you here by the secret way."

"You did right, my good lord," said Cecil, as he sat himself down, somewhat abstractedly, leaning his head upon his hand.

"And now, methinks, this fine fellow, who evidently liveth in the opinion that nothing is so good as that which he doeth, hath done for himself; and *I* shall not be sorry for one. I like not such whipper-snappers—persons of no extraction—ignoble adventurers—who are ever thrusting themselves before their superiors, and winning from them such honors as they alone were born to possess. Indeed, this Raleigh is a most pestilent piece of conceit, and I mislike him hugely: I shall glory in his downfall; and I care not how low his pride is humbled. Besides, when he hath been put out of the way, there will be only the haughty Essex to cope with, who must easily be overthrown, for he hath not the cunning of the other."

"Tush, my lord," exclaimed Cecil, with some impatience; "see you not, that if Raleigh be quite removed, Essex will be paramount? 'Tis a business that must be managed with exceeding delicacy. Hark!" he cried, in a more subdued voice, rising quickly from his seat, and opening the secret door as the Lord Howard prepared to depart—"Here are visiters coming. Haste and tell my Lady Howard not to stir in this matter till I have seen her." Then closing it upon his retreating associate, and unfastening the other door, he was in a minute very busily employed upon some writings on a table before him, when there came a knock; and as soon as he had called out to them that they might have admittance, there entered Sir Walter Raleigh, with a very courtier-like looking gentleman, most daintily attired.

"Now I take this as exceeding kind of you, Sir Walter," exclaimed Cecil, in a manner marvellously friendly, as he recognised his visiters. "And my worthy brother-in-law, my Lord Cobham, too! I know not which to be thankful for most—the presence of yourself or your friend. I pray you be seated."

"Indeed I have but called to acquaint you that her majesty hath signified her consent to my expedition," observed Raleigh.

"Of that I am very heartily glad, believe me," said Sir Robert, shaking Sir Walter by the hand with as much earnestness as if he had been the best friend he had in the world; "and knowing, as I do, your fitness to lead to a profitable and glorious issue all such armaments, in which, as far as I have heard of the best judges, is no man living your superior, I do build upon it great hopes of your advancement in the queen's favor; whereat none of all your friends will feel more infinite delight than myself. But sit, I pray you, and let us drink a bottle of Ippocras to your successful voyage."

"With all my heart!" exclaimed the Lord Cobham, cheerfully, as he flung himself carelessly into a chair, and did put aside his hat. "Such a proposition must be welcome for the sake of mine accomplished friend; but there is another consideration that claimeth to be taken into account—my throat is dry."

"A good consideration truly," remarked Cecil with a smile, as he rang a silver bell that lay upon the table.

"Nay, if you will have wine, I must leave you two to the enjoyment of it—my duties permitting me not to assist you in what would otherwise be mightily agreeable to me; for I must hurry to attend upon her majesty to the playhouse."

"Now sit you down," replied Sir Robert with great demonstration of friendship, preventing Sir Walter from leaving the room—"it wanteth, to my certain knowledge, a good half hour to the time when her majesty is like to be ready, so your haste need not be so immediate—besides I take it hugely unkind of you, seeing that while I, who am of so notorious a gravity, for the sake of one to whose admirable qualities I stand so well affected, am inclined to unbend to a becoming sociality, you, who are well known to be the most absolute prince of good fellows, on the poor excuse of press of time, do seek to play the churl with my well-disposedness."

"I'faith, Raleigh, there must surely be time for a glass or two with my worthy brother-in-law," said his friend, and then added very gravely, "and there is a very good reason why I think so."

"Out with your reason, my good lord," exclaimed Cecil, somewhat urgently—"out with your reason, if you love me, for I do truly hope it will be a convincing one."

"My throat is dry," sagely replied the Lord Cobham.

"O'my life, there is no standing against so grave an argument," said Sir Walter laughingly, as he uncovered and did sit himself down, "so I must e'en be indebted to your courtesy."

At this instant a serving man entered, to whom orders were given for the bringing of the Ippocras; and Sir Water Raleigh noticing a peculiar suit of armor, Sir Robert Cecil then did acquaint him how his father, the Lord Burghley, took great delight in making a collection of offensive and defensive arms, of different times and countries, the which he had that room built on purpose to receive, in preference to keeping them at his magnificent mansion at Theobald's, or at Burghley House; and when Sir Walter, being very learned in these things, did explain to him the age and nature of some, he listened with exceeding respect. In truth, although Cecil was the youngest of the three, he was the very craftiest man in all her majesty's dominions. His appearance was in no wise prepossessing—being short of stature, and with a face not at all handsome, shrewd eyes, and a scanty beard; yet by falling into the humors of the great—affecting a wonderful sincerity, and seeming of a serious turn, he had advanced himself to her majesty's confidence—nor was he inclined there to stop, for ambition was his ruling passion: and everything he schemed about, had for its object, without making enemies, to get as much power as was possible into his own hands. All this time my Lord Cobham was arranging his hair, and trifling with his beard before a very polished coat-of-mail, that served him as a mirror.

The wine now having been brought in and poured out by the serving man before he left the room, into three tall Venetian glasses, Sir Robert Cecil standing up with his glass in his hand, said, with an abundance of humility:—

"It ill becometh me, who am so little skilled in speech, to attempt what requireth such true eloquence as the praise of one who hath so distinguished himself in all manner of knightly and clerk-like accomplishments, as hath my most worthy and esteemed friend Sir Walter Raleigh; yet, as he knoweth full well that my deficiency proceedeth not from lack of love, but from lack of wit, he will, I doubt not, out of the generosity of his humor, be content with the assurance, that, as far as my humble judgment goeth, I do consider him an honor to this our age, and an example to the world, of an able commander by land or sea, a ripe and perfect scholar, and a most honorable gentleman; and knowing that he is about to command an important expedition against the enemy, he will, I question not, also allow me, from the very sincerity of my love, to wish him all that infinite success to which his great merits do entitle him."

"In every word of this I gladly concur, and drink success to him with all my heart," added my Lord Cobham; and, both thereupon, quickly drank off their glasses.

"Sir Robert Cecil," replied Sir Walter in a truly dignified and impressive manner, as he stood up to the table—"It would be but affectation in me were I to seem indifferent to applause; for, however it may be taken, I must acknowledge, that I love praise—because I love to deserve it: and if I have not merited it to the extent your goodness hath bestowed, believe me it was rather from want of ability than inclination: nevertheless I can not say how much beholden to you I am for your good opinion, and, though as it seemeth to me, the success I may have can not come up with your expectations, to prevent as much as lieth in my power your judgment from being called in question, I will, in all times to come, urge my poor qualifications to the utmost. I thank you for your good wishes—and my lord also—and in return drink to your prosperity."

"Well said!" exclaimed the Lord Cobham, as his friend raised the wine to his lips, and each had reseated himself—"the speech is worthy of the wine, and the wine deserveth the speech—therefore are they capitally matched. I only wish my Lord Essex had tasted some of this truly delicious Ippocras before we met him just now at the river's side—methinks he would have looked with a more pleasant countenance."

"Saw you the Lord Essex as you came?" inquired Sir Robert, carelessly.

"We met somebody very like him," replied the other, "only he did regard us with an aspect so Ethiopian, I had like to have taken him for a blackamoor."

"Ah, my lord is doubtless a little out of humor," observed Cecil, significantly. "He is not in favor with the queen."

"O'my word, one would have thought he had fallen out with his own shadow for looking black at him, and resented it by looking the like at all he met," said my Lord Cobham.

"Unfortunately, my good lord," replied the wily Cecil, "there are some men of such unhappy dispositions, that they can not bear to see superior merit taking the lead of them; and must therefore regard the object with a sullen and unfriendly gloominess."

"By this hand I thought so," exclaimed Cobham.

"Not that I would wish to insinuate aught against the noble lord," continued the other, "for he is doubtless of too honorable a nature to have evil intentions against those of whose rising power he may be jealous—though I have heard it said that he beareth no good will to our excellent friend, but of the truth of it can I say nothing. Indeed, in justice to him, I can fairly assert that he hath many estimable qualities, and showeth a very princely liberality—nevertheless, truth compelleth me to say——but your glasses are empty," said he, suddenly breaking off his discourse, and pouring out the wine.

"What were you about to advance, Sir Robert Cecil?" inquired Raleigh, very earnestly. "As far as I have had means of judging of Lord Essex, he is a brave and honorable gentleman, but if he hath said aught or done aught against me, I should be glad to know of it."

"I pray you excuse me there, Sir Walter," quickly replied the other. "Believe me, I am no maker of mischief. It would grieve me much to see two such notable good servants of her majesty at variance; and truly your high spirits are apt enough to quarrel without being set on. The Earl of Essex hath a bountiful disposition, as I have said, and if he inclineth at times to be envious of another's greater merit and better fortune, there be not one of us without our faults; and it is but Christian charity to look over such. How like you the wine?"

"It is of very curious flavor," responded Raleigh, yet, though he answered to the purpose, he did seem as if he was thinking of another matter.

"In truth, 'tis excellent good," said the Lord Cobham, looking at it through the delicate glass in which it sparkled beautifully, and then sipping it that the flavor might dwell upon his tongue, "very exquisite stuff, by this hand! I know not where I should meet with a better wine; indeed, with Ippocras of such admirable quality never came I acquainted. If it be not demanding too much of your courtesy, I pray you tell me of what vintner might you get such brave liquor?"

"Of mine own knowledge know I not, my good lord," answered Cecil, "yet will I make it my business to inquire. Believe me, I am marvellously well pleased it hath taken your fancy, as it showeth its excellence: for, for a singular fine taste in wine, of all men living commend me to the Lord Cobham. Let me replenish your glass."

"I am infinitely bound to you—but in very honesty, Sir Robert, I am but an indifferent judge," said my lord with some humility, yet it was evident he was well pleased with the compliment.

"Your modesty maketh you undervalue yourself," replied Sir Robert: "I have heard your judgment approved of beyond all comparison."

"'Tis indifferent—'tis indifferent," responded the other carelessly.

"Nay, but I have stayed too long," exclaimed Sir Walter Raleigh, jumping up of a sudden from a sort of revery, and making preparations to depart.

"Not a whit," responded Cecil, "there is ample time to get to Whitehall before the queen hath need of your attendance. Another glass, I pray you."

"There, then!" cried Raleigh, tossing off the wine as his friend was making ready, "and now we must tarry no longer. Come, my lord."

"Be advised of me, and think no more of what my foolish tongue hath let out concerning the Lord Essex," said the crafty Cecil in an under tone, with a face of much concern, as he walked by the side of Sir Walter toward the gates—the Lord Cobham following at some distance. "For your own sake, I would not have you quarrel. He hath great power of friends, and—not that I think so ill of that honorable lord as to imagine he would do aught dishonest against you—remember he is the late Lord Leicester's kinsman—like enough, may have been his pupil; and, as it may be known to you, 'the gypsy' did practise very devilish arts against those whom he misliked."

"If I mistake him not, he is of a nobler spirit than to follow so base an example," replied Sir Walter.

"So think I," added Cecil quickly—"yet appearances are oft deceitful, and, for mine own part, I do confess to you I put no great trust in him, he being so nearly allied to one who was so badly disposed. Pardon my zeal, if while I counsel you to keep on good terms with him, if it may be done without injury to your honor, I do earnestly advise you to be on your guard."

"I take your caution in exceeding good

part," responded Raleigh, "and will not fail to bear it in mind."

"I hope you will be worthily entertained of the players," said Sir Robert Cecil, as a few minutes afterward he stood at the gates with his two friends; "for though the gravity of my disposition inclineth not to such amusements, I am well pleased that others should enjoy them."

In a moment after, the Lord Cobham and Sir Walter Raleigh were making all haste to the water side, and the wily Cecil, with his mind filled with ambitious schemes and cunning plots, returned into the house.

CHAPTER VI.

O kiss! which doth those ruddy gems impart,
Or gems, or fruits, of new found paradise;
Breathing all bliss, and sweet'ning to the heart;
Teaching dumb lips a nobler exercise.
O kiss! which souls, ev'n souls, together ties
By links of love, and only nature's art;
How fain would I paint thee to all men's eyes;
Or of thy gifts, at least, shade out some part.

SIR PHILIP SIDNEY.

My lady is unkind perdie,
"Alack, why is she so?"
She loveth another better than me,
And yet she will say no.

SIR THOMAS WYATT.

WHEN Master Francis was left alone by his miserly uncle in the office, as hath previously been described, he presently began to turn over the papers on the desk like one in search of something; and, as if not finding what he sought, exclaiming, "Surely I did leave it here," he the more carefully recommenced his search; but evidently with no better success.

"It is gone!" cried he at last, with a countenance in which surprise seemed to mingle with regret; and then, in much perplexity, appeared to be considering the cause of the disappearance of what he had searched for.

"Possibly my uncle hath taken and destroyed it, for he hath a strange disinclination to my writing verses," said the youth—and then he did seem to think again—but, as was apparent, on another subject, for his fair brow became more troubled, and his clear and most intelligent eyes had an uneasy and suspicious look.

"If she doth affect that Ralph Goshawk?" he exclaimed in a sort of doubting yet inquiring tone, as if he knew not for certain, yet wanted to know something he feared would not be desirable to learn. Then having passed some minutes in profound yet anxious reflection, he suddenly started up, saying, "But she is too good to be deceitful," he seemed at once to dismiss all his uncomfortable thoughts, and set himself to writing out some account, with a very cheerful and delighted countenance. At this he continued diligently, but ever and anon exclaiming, "Oh, excellent Joanna!" or, with a like enthusiasm, "Dear—sweet—exquisite creature!" or, with a countenance that did witness for his sincerity, "Oh, I do love thee infinitely!" till there came a sudden turn in his humor, and with a more thoughtful look he put down his pen, and, folding his arms, asked himself the question—"But why doth she deny me the caresses which she hath so often granted?" after which he again grew uneasy (judging by the expression of his features), and it did seem as if his reflections were hurrying him to very unsatisfactory conclusions; for he looked not at all pleased.

"That Ralph Goshawk seemeth villanously familiar with her," said he at last, in rather a troubled voice; and for some minutes his cogitations appeared of a truly unhappy character: but the anxiety depicted upon his youthful features gradually began to disappear, a smile played about his delicate mouth, and seizing his pen again, exclaiming emphatically, "I'll be sworn she doth not countenance him!" he cheerfully resumed his labor. However, he had not been long so employed, before he started up in exceeding surprise and perturbation, crying out, "Here is a sad mistake!—alack, what have I written?" and he then read aloud from the account which he held in his hand—"To the drawing up a bond for the payment of 250 caresses of good and lawful money of our sovereign lady Queen Joanna"—"Indeed," added he, taking a knife to scratch out the errors he had made, "it be well my uncle saw not this, or he would be wrath—and with good cause." He then proceeded to make the necessary erasures very carefully, only saying with great emphasis, as if wonderfully puzzled as to how such mistakes had happened, "what could I have been thinking about?"

He had but just done this when he was conscious of some one opening the door that led into the street, and looking round observed a very old-looking boy in a leathern jerkin and woollen cap, such as were worn by the common people, ad-

vancing into the office, desperately intent upon picking a bone. He was somewhat short of stature, with a pair of bandy legs, and his face—none of the cleanest—was fat and freckled, having a noticeable huge mouth, then upon the stretch—a pug nose, and eyes squinting abominably. Without saying a word, he marched toward one corner of the room, and sat himself down on the floor, picking his bone—the which employment he varied by giving an occasional bite—which made a mark that placed beyond dispute his mouth's capacity—in a thick hunk of bread he drew from under his jerkin.

Master Francis, who had regarded his visiter with considerable curiosity since his entrance, at last, seeing him with the utmost effrontery munching away without seeming to care for anything else, asked him his business.

"Be you called Master Francis?" inquired the boy, without removing his eyes from the bone.

"That is my name, certainly," replied the youth.

"Sure on't?" asked the other, taking a monstrous piece out of the hunk of bread.

"Of course I am," said Master Francis.

"Have ye any witnesses?" inquired the boy.

"If you don't choose to take my word for it, you must needs let it alone, and go about your business," observed the youth sharply, though too much amused to be much offended.

"Rather pepperish—do to play Hotspur," remarked his companion in an under tone, as he renewed his attack upon the bone. In a minute afterward he inquired, somewhat authoritatively, "Whose house be this?"

"It is my uncle's," replied Master Francis.

"Prythee tell me his name, if he hath one."

"Gregory Vellum."

"His calling?" inquired the boy, still keeping his teeth employed.

"'Tis that of a scrivener—but get you gone quickly, or you shall repent this intrusion, I promise you."

"Rather desperate—do to play Richard the Third," said the boy.

"Who are you, and what seek you here?" inquired Master Francis impatiently—"I have quite enough to plague me without your assistance."

"Rather melancholy—do to play Hamlet," said the other, stripping the bone perfectly clean, and making the bread disappear rapidly.

"Nay, if you do not satisfy me for this impertinence, and speedily, I will have it out of your flesh!" exclaimed the youth angrily.

"Rather bloody-minded—do to play Shylock," answered the boy in the same quiet tone he had used from the commencement.

"I'faith but this is unbearable!" cried Master Francis, as he jumped off the stool with a thick stick in his hand belonging to his uncle that lay upon the desk, and ran to his visiter as if with a design to give him a drubbing. "Now tell me, you worthless varlet, what want you here, or your bones shall ache for it," said he, holding the stick threateningly over him.

"Why, I am Gib, the call-boy!" replied the boy, finishing his last mouthful, and eying the uplifted weapon with no small astonishment—"I hold the honorable office of call-boy to the Globe, on the Bankside, and earn me the handsome sum of a whole shilling a-week, and find myself out on't: but such a one for the business, the players are not like to find more than once in an age, I take it—and of this they are in no way ignorant; for Master Burbage hath said that my 'calling' did credit to me, and I did credit to my calling—and, as I remember me, Master Green said he could swear I was born with a caul, I was so apt at it. In fact, there be none like me. It was but the other day I paid a visit to the Rose to see *their* call-boy. Such a miserable caitiff! the varlet's got no mouth! unless an insignificant bit of a button-hole in his face, scarce big enough to admit a peascod, be called such; the natural consequence of which is, that he hath not voice enough to frighten a cricket. Now have I something like a mouth"—

"Something like half a dozen made into one!" said Master Francis, seeing that the boy extended his jaws to a compass beyond conception.

"And when I call," continued he, "my voice may be heard on t'other side of the river—by those who hear well enough. If it be your desire, I will favor you with a specimen of my talents."

"I thank you, but I would much rather that you would favor me with your business," replied the youth, who was too much amused to put his recent threats into execution.

"But besides being call-boy," added the other, unheeding what had just been

said, "I am oft times required to act parts—very important parts too, I promise you."

"Indeed!" cried Master Francis, regarding with a smile the droll-looking object at his feet. "In what part could they possibly trust you upon the stage?"

"I play the cock in Hamlet," replied the boy very gravely—at which his companion laughed heartily—"and so much to the very life, that Master Taylor saith he shall be content to pick a *crow* with me every time he playeth the prince of Denmark. And Master Fletcher saith that that piece can never go off as it ought to do unless I have the cock-ing of it. Besides which I come on as one of Falstaff's regiment—make a very excellent courtier in the background—play one of the ghosts in Richard the Third's dream—and at all times make one of the army, of which there are at least some score of us, scene-shifters included. In fact, I should think myself greatly to be envied, were it not for one thing."

"Of what can you complain?" asked Master Francis.

"I am obliged to eat my meals where I can," replied the boy—"sometimes in Juliet's tomb—sometimes in Desdemona's bed—sometimes in Richard the Third's tent—one day near the forum at Rome—another close upon the Tower of London—nay, even this very day have I been forced to munch my dinner as I came along, because I was sent to you in a hurry with a letter from Master Shakspeare."

"A letter from Master Shakspeare to me!" cried Master Francis impatiently. "Why gave you not it to me before?"

"Because you chose not to ask for it," said the other very quietly. "I was told to be sure and give it to the right person, so I thought I'd make proper inquiries."

"Well, give it me—make haste! make haste!" exclaimed the youth.

"It's like enough to be about offering to take you into the company," observed the boy, as he pulled off his cap leisurely, and gave the letter out of it, making a notable mark on each side with his greasy thumb and finger; "but my advice be, try what you can do in the female line. You be just the age and figure for it; and we want a new woman marvellously. Our Juliet's obliged to shave twice a day, and our Lady Macbeth, getting to be a man, hath threatened to throw up her engagement because they wont allow her to let her beard grow. I can put you up to a good deal about making your points, and dying gracefully, and walking in woman's fashion—for I've seen it done scores of times, I promise you—so don't lose heart on that account."

As Master Francis began reading the note, the call-boy got upon his legs, shook the crumbs from his jerkin, and sidled up to him.

"I pray you tell me what terms offer they?" asked he, trying to look over at the note, which he could not very well reach to do.

"No terms at all," replied the other, in too good humor to be offended at the freedom his companion was taking.

"Ah, you see it be not every one that can get a whole shilling a-week and find himself out on't," observed the boy with an air of much importance; "but talent will always get its price."

"I am glad to find that yours is so well appreciated," remarked Master Francis laughingly. "However, not to balk your inquisitiveness, which is somewhat of the greatest I must confess, this note is only to make an appointment at the playhouse to meet Master Shakspeare."

"Doubtless you will then be engaged," said the call-boy. "If you find any difficulty in getting admittance—for Will Peppercorn, who keeps the door, is not so social to strangers as am I—just ask you for Gib the call-boy, though some do call me Stentor, because, as I have heard, he was a famous call-boy in ancient times; and say you are a friend of mine, you will find your entrances and your exits as easy as throwing at cocks at Shrovetide."

"I thank you, Gib," replied Master Francis, scarcely able to keep a serious countenance, for the look of the boy was so comical, with his queer eyes and enormous mouth, and important swagger, that he had a great ado to refrain from laughing in his face.

"This seemeth a snuggish place—how much may you get a week here?" inquired the boy very earnestly, after a careful scrutiny of the office.

"That question I do not think it necessary to answer," responded the other as gravely as he could.

"Well—those that have gifts should make the best use of them," dryly observed Gib. "But don't despair—who knows but that *you* may be a call-boy some of these days—only I'm afraid you hav'n't got the very properest sort of mouth."

"That I regret not, believe me," re-

sponded Master Francis with a smile. "And now I should earnestly advise you to make the best of your way back to Master Shakspeare, and tell him I will not fail of the appointment."

"Ha!" replied Gib, turning on his heel and slowly proceeding to the door, tossing up the bone, with which he had not yet parted. "Now, remember you my advice—do the women, and you can not fail of getting on; and if you want to know how to look modest and like a dainty young gentlewoman, come you to me, I can instruct you in all that sort of thing, for I've got a monstrous deal of experience that way. Indeed, Master Burbage did say that I should get advanced into the woman's parts when I was old enough, and methinks it is high time I should attempt something of the kind. It's a genteel part of the profession, according to my thinking. Master Condell did tell me he thought I could play Ophelia ravishingly."

"Indeed!" exclaimed his companion, unable to refrain from laughing at the idea."

"For my own part, being of an exquisite melancholy humor, I doubt not I should shine in tragedy," continued the call-boy, taking a look at Master Francis so solemnly ludicrous that it instantly did set him into a roar. "Rather humorous!" cried the boy as he opened the door, "do to play the fool:" and thereupon his mouth did spread out into a grin so far beyond all human conceit, that the other laughed till the tears ran out of his eyes. "Well," continued Gib, "though I wish you a bountiful share of good luck, in honest truth I say it—expect not to get so handsome a wage as a whole shilling a-week, and find yourself out on't." And thereat he strutted out of the door, with such a villanous squint that it would have tickled the fancy of one at the point of death.

Master Francis, much amused at the oddity of the boy and his exceeding assurance, returned to his seat in monstrous good humor, to finish his account; but he had scarcely taken pen in hand, when, on hearing a noise, he turned round, and lo! there was Gib's bandy legs again marching in.

"Stick to the women, I pray you, and you shall find your advantage in it," exclaimed he, with a very earnest seriousness, and immediately disappeared.

"Away with you!" cried Master Francis, scarcely knowing whether to laugh or to be angry. Then he applied himself to his task, and did finish it without further interruption. Presently his uncle was heard stumping along the passage with his stick, and in a few seconds he entered, looking very crabbed and savage.

"Hast done that account?" inquired he sharply.

"Yes, uncle," replied the youth.

"Then take it to Master Ephraim Venture, the merchant in Thames street, nigh unto Castle Baynard," said the old man; "and be sure to press for payment—for it be said that he hath had losses, therefore must he be looked after. 'Sblood, an' he do not pay quickly, I'll make him smart for't! Tell him I must and will have my money."

"I will, uncle," responded the nephew, preparing with evident alacrity to start on his errand.

"And mind that thou tarry not," added he, "for I have business for thee at home."

"I will use all convenient speed," replied Master Francis, and in a minute after he was making the best of his way out of St. Mary Axe, right glad to get from the house, and as well pleased that the merchant's in Thames street lay in the very direction to which his inclination most tended. On he proceeded in his way, taking no heed of the sober citizens speeding on their business, or even of their daughters, proud of a new kirtle or a dainty coif, showing off their pretty coquetries to the gallants that came strolling along in their best braveries, maphap carelessly humming a tune, or whispering a well-devised compliment as they passed, at the which none were very hugely offended, I warrant you, for their brilliant eyes sparkled the more; and some smiled with exceeding pleasantness, and a few did take sly peeps over their shoulder to notice if they were followed; but giving himself up to the inconstant humor of his thoughts—now hoping, now despairing—now filled with the passion of love—now moved with the conceit of jealousy, he regarded nothing around him till he entered into Eastcheap. Then he was stirred up into a very proper consciousness of where he was—his heart began to beat most disturbedly—the paleness of his cheek made way for a flush of crimson, and his eye had gained a lustrousness that gave unto his gentle countenance a truly eloquent expression.

Passing by shops of divers kinds, and even taking no heed of the barber chirurgeon's over the way, where his true

friend, Harry Daring, was apprenticed, he at last made for one that was a mercer's, where the owner, a somewhat lusty old man with a lively roguish look, and an excellent jolly face, stood recommending to a customer sundry ells of three-piled velvet that lay before him, whom, seeing engaged, he stopped not to gossip with, but went on, as if it was his wont, to a little room at the back, where finding no one, he opened a door, and proceeded up a little flight of stairs close upon it, at the top of which there was another door, whereat, with his heart in a greater flutter than ever, he did knock gently with his knuckles; and hearing a voice, the soft tones of which he recognised with a most infinite delight, he uncovered and entered the room.

The chamber was rather low, and of a no great size, having a wainscot and floor of oak, with rafters very solid, running across the ceiling, and a window stretching out into the street. The furniture was substantial rather than elegant —such as might be seen in the houses of the better sort of citizens—yet was there a considerable show of taste in many things, which spoke as plain as could any words, that a woman's graceful hand had had the ordering of them. There was no one therein but Joanna, who sat, or rather reclined, in an ample chair with arms, supporting her head by her hand; she wore an elegant dress of watchet color, laced down the front, with a girdle of silver baudekin, at the which was a little pocket on one side. Her silken hair was artfully disposed, falling in a love-lock on her delicate shoulder, and bound at the top in a network caul of gold. Her well-shaped feet, were cased in a pair of dainty white stockings and velvet slippers, projecting out of her petticoat, with the heel of one resting upon the instep of the other, to the manifest disclosure of a most exquisite ankle. In this position, the well-defined outline of the ripened beauties of her figure were seen to great advantage, especially as the low, tight boddice then in the fashion, did excellently well display the full bust, and truly admirable neck and shoulder, the delicateness whereof have I not the cunning to describe, therefore will I leave it to the imagination of the courteous reader. She had evidently been a thinking; but whether pleasurable or otherwise I have no means of knowing except this be taken as a sign, that when Master Francis first beheld her at that time, there was a severity in the loveliness of her countenance, tempered with a very touching melancholy.

"Joanna!" exclaimed the youth, hastening delightedly to her side, "I am here at thy desire, and truly to mine own most infinite gratification. But what aileth thee?" he inquired suddenly, in a tone of affectionate interest, as he noticed that the pleasurableness expressed in his own features was not reflected in hers. At the question, she looked at him as with a careful scrutiny of his pale and thoughtful brow, but said never a word.

"Have I angered thee?" he asked, in in a more subdued voice; and his gaze became as melancholy as her own. "Believe me I meant it not. In truth, I would rather die than anger thee."

"No!" replied she to his question, with impressive tones and eloquent emphasis. "Thou hast not angered me." And then the severity of her look much abating, added, with great stress on the words, "Thou hast never angered me."

"Indeed, I hope not," said Master Francis earnestly. "But who or what hath made thee look so unhappy?"

"Thou hast," she answered.

"I!" exclaimed the youth with extreme surprise and sorrow. "What a wretch am I to have done it! and yet I know not how it could be; for gratitude for thy never-tiring kindness doth prompt me at all times to do the very reverse. Tell me how it was, and instantly will I seek to undo the unsought-for mischief."

Joanna silently took from the little pocket at her girdle a paper that she gave into his hands—the which he instantly opened, designing to read it, as such seemed to him to be her wish; but to his exceeding astonishment he discovered it to be the very poem he had written and lost from off the desk in his uncle's office. He stood like one that is detected in wrong-doing, unable to say aught for himself; yet, though he saw that his expostulation had done him mischief, knew he not what offence there could be in it.

"What made thee think I had ceased to love thee?" asked she, in a voice by no means angry, after she had watched for a sufficient time, his downcast eyes and modest confusion of countenance, as he stood before her.

"It seemed to me that thou dost regard another," replied Master Francis, tremulously.

"Whom?" inquired Joanna, with

more earnestness, fixing on him a somewhat anxious and penetrating look.

"Ralph Goshawk," answered he.

She remained silent for some few seconds, but a faint smile might have been observed about the corners of her beautiful mouth.

"In truth, I marvel thou couldst have entertained such a conception," said she at last.

"Dost thou not love him indeed?" asked the youth, almost incredulously, as it were.

"Indeed, I love him not," she replied.

"And dost regard me as kindly as thou wert used?" he inquired more urgently, raising his eloquent eyes to her own.

"Methinks quite as kindly," answered she.

"Dear, dear Joanna!" exclaimed Master Francis as he kneeled on one knee, and taking in his the disengaged hand that lay upon her lap, bowed his head till his lips rested thereon, and in that position remained. The melancholy expression of Joanna's countenance still was altered not; but there was now a tender interest in her dark eyes as she gazed upon her youthful lover. Presently she raised herself in her position, and took his hand in both hers, very affectionately.

"Yet am I much hurt that thou shouldst doubt me," said she; "I thought I had proved beyond question, how much I regarded thee above all others—perhaps with more carelessness than did become me. But knowing the innocency of mine intentions, and trusting in the modesty of thy disposition, I was content. Alack! 'tis a sad world! we can not do right when we wish; and when we are satisfied of our conduct, there cometh some malicious tongue to slander our doings. None know the wickedness that exists—that poisons the air we breathe with a perpetual pestilence, and obliges us to do by craft what we can not do by honesty. I have to endure many things that make me unhappy—very unhappy—I needed not such verses as thou hast written."

As she concluded the sentence, he raised his head, and saw that she was wiping with her handkerchief a tear that did tremble on her eyelid.

"Indeed, they shall trouble thee no more," cried the youth, as he disengaged his hand, and tore the paper into numberless small fragments; "and very heartily am I vexed that I should have given thee a moment's uneasiness. For what wonderful goodness, hast thou exhibited toward me—the like of which surely was never known! Truly I must have behaved most unnaturally to have vexed thee in this manner; and I'll never forgive myself, if thou wilt not forgive me." And then, most sorrowful in heart, he hid his face upon her lap.

"I *have* forgiven thee," said she, affectionately twining her fingers in the light curls of his chestnut hair; "but take not such fancies into thy head again; be content with the assurances thou art continually receiving of how much I regard thee, and think nothing of whatever else may seem of a different tendency. Nothing can be so sure as that, whilst thou art worthy, thou wilt be beloved." Master Francis was too much enraptured to reply; and in this position they remained for some minutes—she bending over him, with her dark hazel eyes softened into tenderness; and he impressed so deeply with the subduing spirit of the moment, that he would not, or cared not to move from where he was.

Joanna having at last taken away her hands to enclasp his, he raised his head, and looking into her face, very fondly, yet with a touch of regret, said—"But why hast thou denied me those most sweet caresses thou didst use to grant?"

"Truly I am not in the mood on all occasions," replied she, in rather a sad tone of voice; "there are remembrances I can not obliterate when I would, that come upon me at times, and make me regardless of all except the discomfort they bring. It would be but a mockery to caress thee under such circumstances and indeed, though I may often seem gay hearted—forgetting for a time the unpleasantness of the past, in the enjoyments of the present—yet, when awakened to recollection—which is no difficult matter—there lives not a creature on this earth so truly wretched as am I. Be content then with the pleasure I can grant when I may be in the humor, and seek not when the time is not auspicious, to increase my disquietude by ill-timed importunity."

"I will not," replied he; "but will thou do so ever again?" he asked, as if almost afraid to put the question.

"I will," she answered, with apparent unaffectedness.

"Dear Joanna, but wilt thou do so *soon?*" he inquired, more impressively.

"I will," said she.

"Exquisite Joanna! but wilt thou do so *now?*" he asked, with still greater emphasis.

It would be unveiling the sweet mysteries of affection, to describe the endearments that blessed the reconciliation of these devoted lovers. There throbbeth not a heart in the wide world, that hath been touched by the generous influence of true love, but hath played its part in the same drama, and can, from the fond prompting of the memory, imagine the entrancing scene more vividly than could I describe the acting of it. Methinks, too, that the development of those delicious influences that make humanity angelic, should be kept sacred from the vulgar eye; else might the selfish and the profligate find matter in it for idle speculation, or licentious conjecture. Pity it is that there should be any in whom the better part of their natures hath vanished, like the sap of a decaying tree, and vanity making them believe all to be like unto themselves, in the green freshness of fairer plants, they can see naught but their own hollowness and worthlessness. I know that, by the generous and true-hearted, what I should relate would be rightly interpreted; but no writer is so fortunate as to meet with all readers of such a sort.

The affection which existed between Joanna and Master Francis, had in it this peculiar feature, that the former had so much the seniority of her lover, it invested her with an evident controlling power over him. She appeared as though uniting in her behavior the authority of a careful guardian with the fondness of a devoted woman, and sometimes it appeared as if some strange interest bound her to the youth, of so deep a tenderness, as was marvellously like unto that of a parent. In truth, it was a strange thing to behold a creature so exquisitely fashioned, having much the outward appearance of one existing only for, and in the enjoyment of the most passionate worship of the opposite sex, seeming, with a delicacy the purest nature could never have excelled, so virtuously to conduct herself, as proved all the sterling excellence of womanhood was manifest in her actions; while the enamored youth that knelt before her, dumb with excess of modesty, and overpowered with the intensity of his admiration, regarded her with such an enthusiasm in his delighted gaze, tempered with so profound a respect, as plainly showed he loved with the purity of heart, and earnestness of purpose, which belong only to that age and disposition that exist in the enjoyment of a perfect innocency.

"Dear heart," exclaimed he, after a long, yet very eloquent silence, "it seemeth to me exceeding strange that when I sit me down to write of thee, all admirable thoughts, like the bees hastening to the sweet blossoms, come crowding to be penned; but when with my lips I would essay to breathe into thine ear aught of what rare pleasure I experience from the continual influence of thy unbounded goodness, such words as I have at command are so little to the purpose, that I am forced to a seeming ungrateful silence; yet am I most gratefully bound to thee. Thou art my guardian angel, and in earnest truth, most exquisite Joanna, my heart ever yearneth to pour out its spirit in thanksgiving for thy unceasing kindness."

He received no reply, unless it was conveyed in a more evident pressure of the hands she held clasped in her own, or in a softer and more thrilling glance from the clear hazel of her lustrous eyes. He continued—

"My benefactress! my"—

"Hush!" she exclaimed, quickly interrupting him. "Have I not told thee never to allude to what I have done for thy good?"

He remained silent, as if conscious he had committed an error.

"And now, prythee, tell me how hast thou sped with thy tragedy?" she inquired.

"It will not do, dear Joanna," he replied.

"Despair not—thou wilt do better anon," she said, in an encouraging tone.

"But methinks I have found a friend," added Master Francis, more cheerfully.

"I am truly glad on't," said she.

"Hast heard of Master Shakspeare—whose plays so wonderfully do delight the town?" inquired the youth.

"Indeed have I," she replied. "My father hath often promised to take me to see the players do a play of his, but he liketh the sports of the Bear Garden best, therefore I have not been."

"I should like to take thee mightily," observed he. "For it is most delectable entertainment. But I must tell thee—Master Shakspeare, to whom I was directed to send my tragedy, though he did tell me very candidly of its faults, expressed himself right glad to do me a service; and as earnest of his sincerity, he hath but now sent for me to the playhouse."

"Speed thee, then, Francis," she exclaimed, rising from her seat and raising

him from the ground. "It be not right of thee to lose the precious time when such a friend desireth to serve thee. But here," she added, as she took from around her neck the very gold chain she did receive of old Gregory Vellum, and threw it over her youthful lover. "Wear that for my sake—but let not thine uncle see it, or mayhap he may think thou hadst it not honestly, and question thee churlishly upon it; and I do not wish thee to say I gave it thee, nor do desire that thou shouldst say what is not true. And let me again request of thee in true kindness, that when thou wantest aught that his miserly nature doth refuse, ask it of me, and thou shalt have it straight."

"Nay, dear Joanna," he replied, looking somewhat distressed. "Thou hast lavished upon me so many gifts already, that I am ashamed to accept of this, or to ask of thee anything; and, if thou wilt not be offended, I would sooner that thou shouldst continue to wear it. In truth, it is too good a thing for me to have."

"That it can not be," answered she, regarding him with a more perceptible fondness. "I would have thee wear it beneath thy doublet, and affix it to the miniature of thy mother. Now, no excuses! I will not hear of them. And be sure let me know when thou dost lack anything."

"Oh, thou art too kind!" exclaimed the youth, with all the expression that love and gratitude could give.

"Now haste thee to Master Shakspeare," said Joanna.

"Dare I ask of thee once again, to let me taste of those honey sweet delights thou didst bestow on me a brief while since," inquired he, looking into her eyes, as if his own were drawn thereunto by some marvellous magic. How she answered, methinks it be scarce necessary to state, when it cometh to be known, that in the next moment Master Francis was speeding on his uncle's errand with a heart as light as if he had not a care in the world.

Having delivered the account—more courteously than his miserly kinsman designed, he posted off to the playhouse on the Bankside, sometimes imagining what Master Shakspeare did want with him, and thereupon building many monstrous fine castles in the air, and then turning his thoughts to the contemplation of the exquisite excellences of Joanna, and feeding his mind with dreams of happiness she was to realize at some not-far-distant day. In this mood he arrived at the playhouse, which he recognised by the flag flying at the top. It was thronged with people—some waiting to see the queen, and others the play; round about were boys and serving men holding horses, and here and there might be seen costard-mongers and others bawling out fruit. Making for a little door at which there was no crowd, he was entering thereat, when he was stopped by a surly looking fellow with a wooden leg and a red nose.

"Well, how now! what dost want?" he cried in a gruff voice.

"I am come to see Master Shakspeare," replied the youth.

"Won't do," said the other sharply, as he took up a position before him, as if to stop his proceeding further, and then scrutinized his appearance very closely. "The players be all a dressing, and can't be disturbed for every jackanapes that wants to see the play for nothing."

"But I have business with him," added Master Francis.

"Won't do," repeated the fellow, stumping closer to him, and looking more forbiddingly. "Dost thou not know that this be no hour for him to see runaway apprentices who seek to be players? So get thee gone."

"But he hath sent for me, and I *must* see him," said the youth more determinedly.

"Won't do, I tell thee!" shouted the man. "Nay, if thou dost not take thyself off, I'll set the dog on thee. Here, Pincher! Pincher! Pincher!" And immediately a savage-looking wiry-haired terrier came from under a chair barking and snapping at his heels. Master Francis, seeing that there was no remedy, was just about to turn back with a heavy heart, when, who should come into the place but the same wide-mouthed, squinting-eyed boy that had brought him the letter, bearing a tankard in his hand, as if he had come from a neighboring tavern. Gib seemed to understand the state of the case immediately.

"How now, Will Peppercorn!" he cried, in a voice that showed that the name of Stentor was not ill-applied. "This good youth is he whom I told thee Master Shakspeare did so much desire to see."

"How should I know that?" said the fellow sulkily; then drawing off his dog, returned to his chair.

"Follow me, and I will show you the way with a very absolute good will," added the call-boy; but before Master Fran-

cis had got but a few yards he turned round and inquired, "Why said you not you were my friend? He would not have dared serve thee so. But we must needs learn ere we get knowledge—so come on, and carefully." Master Francis found himself in a very dark place in which he could see neither to the right, nor to the left, nor yet straight on; and was directed solely by the voice of his companion, which ceased not a moment.

"Stick to the women, I pray you," he continued, "and you must needs be made a man of soon: but mind the thunder there!"

At this injunction the youth was sadly puzzled.

"If you have not the proper modesty, I will soon put you in the way of getting it, as I have said; therefore hesitate not, for such another opportunity is not like to happen. Here, mind you your footing, or you can not help falling upon the rain."

Master Francis looked about, expecting to find a pool of water near him; but nothing of the kind did he see.

"Now turn you sharp round the walls of Athens, and keep you on the left of Prospero's cell," said the other.

Unable quite to comprehend his meaning, the youth made a turn as he was desired, found his feet caught—laid hold of he knew not what, that his elbow struck against—this gave way, and down he came on his face upon something that seemed like a heap of canvas, bringing over him a pile of the same kind.

"There now!" exclaimed the call-boy, in a tone of apparent vexation—"you have tumbled smack upon the sea, and brought down upon you the palace of Antioch."

Frightful as this announcement might seem, it did not mean any great mischief after all.

Master Francis soon extricated himself from the fallen scenery, and without any more mishaps was conducted by his guide to the chamber in which Master Shakspeare was waiting for him.

CHAPTER VII.

Man's life's a tragedy: his mother's womb
From which he enters is his tiring-room;
This spacious earth the theatre, and the stage
That country which he lives in; Passions, Rage, a
Folly, and Vice, are actors: the first cry
The prologue to th' ensuing tragedy.
The former act consisteth in dumb shows;
The second, he's to more perfection grows;
I' the third he is a man, and doth begin
To mature vice, and act the deeds of sin;
I' the fourth declines; i' the fifth diseases clog
And trouble him: then Death's his epilogue.
SIR WALTER RALEIGH.

ALL the players were assembled in a large room of rather mean appearance, having little furniture, save settles, some few chairs, an old table, on which lay sundry tankards and drinking vessels, and a long mirror hung up against the wainscot. The players were dressed in character for the play of Henry the Fourth, the second part; and divers young noblemen and gentlemen were among them. Some were sitting, some standing in groups, and others walking up and down—going out and coming in at intervals; while a voice, evidently from its loudness belonging to the "Stentor" of the company, kept bawling from without as the play proceeded—"Falstaff, on!" or "Shallow and Silence, on!" or "The Prince, on!" and then, others knowing that their turn would be next, got themselves ready to appear upon the stage. A merrier set there seemed not in all her majesty's dominions. It was evident that care had naught to do with such choice spirits—for the quick jest and the harmless jibe went round, and the loud laughter followed with them all; nor did there seem to be any distinction of rank among them and their associates; or if such might be, it was without doubt in favor of the players, for they appeared wonderfully independent and careless of what they said.

Master Shakspeare stood in one corner of the room pointing out to Master Francis the different persons around them; and occasionally returning the friendly salutation of the young gallants who came thronging in, and looked as if they were mightily well pleased to have speech of him; but none could have received more satisfaction than did the modest youth at his side, for to him it was quite a new world. He, who had seen nothing of society save the customers and associates of the scrivener, now found himself among the most famous authors and players of the time, with a fair sprinkling of noble lords, distinguished knights, and honorable gentlemen. He listened with exceeding attention to every word that was uttered by his gifted companion, and regarded each individual that his attention was drawn unto with an interest scarcely possible to be conceived.

"See you that most worshipful-looking personage talking to Taylor and Condell?" inquired Master Shakspeare of

his visiter, pointing out a very smartly-dressed gallant, evidently much older than he wished to appear.—"He that weareth so fine a satin cloak, and hath such gay rosettes in his shoes." Master Francis easily perceived who was meant. "That is Sir Narcissus Wrinkles. He hath as many lines in his face as you may find in a chart of the new world, wherewith Time hath written the sum total of his age, yet doth he imagine that he can find a way to disprove his arithmetic; and with a periwig of the newest fashion, and a beard dyed to match—a very fustian voice prodigal in strange oaths—a leering look—a swaggering gait—and an infinite affectation of the air and apparelling of our youngest gallants, he seeketh to be thought as youthful as Ganymede, and as full of tricks as a kitten. See, now! he is telling his auditors some notable lie of the feats he did last week with the bottle, or the wonders performed yesterday eve at the Bordello; mayhap he digresses into some famous adventure with the constable of the watch, and then pathetically laments him, that his young blood should lead him into such scrapes. Hear how loudly he laughs at his own follies; and see with what a hearty smack of the shoulder he saluteth his next neighbor! But they who hear him know their man, and laugh, not *with* him, but *at* him."

Master Shakspeare then directed his attention to another group.

"See you that sagacious looking youth," said he, "that hath got Will Kempe in serious discourse, close unto where Anthony Wadeson, Thomas Pope, and Nicholas Towley, are in such furious discussion? Notice the very gravity of his features—the demure combing of his hair—the antique cut of his beard. See how soberly he is clad—mark how stiffly he bears himself. He speaks slowly—as if he weighed every word that fell from his lips—and seemeth quite shocked at the boisterousness of manner of the group of gay young lords at his right. He goeth among us by the name of Young Antiquity—yet is he called by his proper name, Lord Wiseacre. I warrant you, he is entertaining my friend Will with a right woful lamentation upon the degeneracy of the age; and leaving him with a shake of the head worthy of a second Nestor, is now making the profound remark, 'Alack! boys will be boys!'"

Master Francis could not help a smile, for the manner in which his companion spoke the last words, was marked with such an exceeding drollery, that to look grave the while, was out of the question.

"A little way to the left of him, notice that neatly dressed old gallant, talking with so mysterious an air to a handsome young nobleman," continued Master Shakspeare. "The one is my Lord Howard of Walden, who sweareth every man of his acquaintance to strict confidence, and then letteth out the famous secret to all whom he can get to listen, of some fair dame being in love with him. He will dilate upon every look he has received from her, and enumerate what wonderful signs she hath given him of her regard; and then he will assert his exceeding virtuousness, and the fear he is in that this affection of another woman for him should be noticed by my Lady Howard, whom he believed to be a very miracle of chastity—though there be others that have a different opinion; and will conjure his listener to be as secret as the grave, and straightway go and tell as many as he can the same story, the which, as may well be believed, hath no existence save in his own imagination, and thorough vanity. The person he hath hold of is my Lord Pembroke, as worthy, admirable, and generous a man as breathes; and desireth to be my excellent patron and friend.

"Now, behold you those two young lords that have got Hart by the ear, up in the corner?" continued he; "they are my Lords Simple and Dimple; they affect to be the Castor and Pollux of these our times, and are never seen apart. At no time have they been heard to differ on any one subject; they dress alike on all occasions—ay, to such a nearness, that if my Lord Simple have thirty points to his hose, of a surety hath my Lord Dimple exactly the same. At meals they will be helped from the same dish, and have the same quantity to a nicety. If there be but one wing left of the pullet, it must needs be divided to the exactitude of a hair, or they will touch it not; and if the one hath a spoonful more gravy in his trencher than hath the other, then are both infinitely miserable till the balance be adjusted. This conceit they follow up in all things:—when Simple hath the toothache, Dimple tieth up his jaws; and if one be afflicted with the colic, the other rubbeth his bowels, and belloweth like a town bull. Yet with all this affectation of friendship, I warrant you Castor doth not care a fig's end for Pollux—and Pollux would not cross the way

to save his Castor from the whipping-post."

Then Master Shakspeare, suddenly turning round, said to his young friend, "Hear you how Green maketh the people laugh?" And sure enough there was heard at that moment a very roar of laughter, which, at intervals, did continue, with boisterous clapping of hands and the like.

"Now turn your vision to where stands that tall slim gentleman, in close converse with Robert Armyn," said he. "Saw you anything so spic and span? he looks as dainty as a bowl of whipped syllabub, and smelleth as nice as a dish of stewed prunes. Surely you will think so fine a personage was made only for Sundays; for he seemeth a marvellous deal too delectable for this every-day world. His speech too he maketh to match with his dress; for it be other folk's finery, cut and clipped in accordance with his own taste. Truly is he choice in his phrases, and putteth them to a very absolute good use. He will talk you upon the cracking of nuts in the tapestry style of Sir Philip Sydney his Arcadia; and describe the fashion of a garter in the heroic vein of the blank verse of my Lord Sackville. He is Master Aniseed: doubtless you suppose that his birth was as delicate as his behavior; and his bringing up as holyday-like as his apparelling. Yet was his mother a poor midwife, and his father a rat-catcher, and to the latter reputable vocation was he born and bred, and did practise with very notable success, after the demise of his worshipful parents, till a miserly uncle dying, whose heir he was, he straightway began very earnestly, with his new found gold, to purchase the necessaries of gentility; and now passeth he, as he doth imagine, for a truly creditable gentleman. 'Tis like you may fancy, by the pains he takes, that Master Aniseed preferreth his new mode of life wonderfully: but in that are you much deceived; for have I good grounds for saying, that, in secret, he doth sigh continually for the more exquisite pleasure he hath found in the catching of rats."

At that moment there entered at the door one of the players, dressed as King Henry IV., whom Master Shakspeare thus addressed:—

"Well, Lowing, and how goeth the play with her majesty?"

"Never went anything better," said he, very cheerfully; "her majesty hath shown from the beginning an admirable interest in the story; and Green hath made her laugh till her crown tottered again;" and then he passed on.

"Here, observe you that portly man, with the red face and the black beard, talking familiarly to our Dame Quickly and Doll Tearsheet," continued Master Shakspeare to his young friend; "a turkey-cock looks not so valiant. Judging of him by the way he beareth himself, one might suppose that he had inherited the warlike spirits of all the heroes who have gone before him. He seemeth of so great a heart that he could have braved Cæsar, or pulled Alexander by the nose. Hear him talk, and to his, the deeds of the seven champions of Christendom are but as the feats of idle apprentices. There, see how he stalks across the room, holding by the scabbard his monstrous rapier, and looking about him as valiantly as if he cared not a rush for the whole company, and would fight them all round if any dared but wink at him. Yet is Captain Swagger not so dangerous as he looks;—indeed he hath done no great damage as yet, as I have heard; nor is he ever like to distinguish himself that way; for in his heart he hath a most Christian abhorrence of the shedding of blood; therefore, at all times, he taketh good care of his own skin. He will seem full of quarrel where there be no disposition shown to take offence; but if you look him bravely in the face the whilst, you may tread on his toes, and he will be in no hurry to take notice of it."

"Now is it the common opinion," added he, "that the players be confined to the playhouse; but I do maintain, and have described some of the characters in this room, to prove that I speak to the purpose, that there be better players off the stage than on. Moreover, if you look throughout the various busy scenes in the drama of life, you shall have good cause to admire the excellence with which some do play their parts—often to the complete delusion of the spectators into the belief that they are what they seem. By this art, how often doth the wanton pass for a creature virtuously given, and the mere cheater play the game of an honest man. This is it that makes the glib-tongued profligate so perfectly assume the character of the devoted lover; that teacheth the sanctimonious hypocrite how to be regarded as one of God's chosen; that gives to youth and assurance the name of candor and disinterestedness; and gravity and gray hairs invest with the air of wisdom and goodness. Truly,

Master Francis, if you look well to the world, you shall find that there be feigners that beat us poor players all to naught."

Master Francis had listened with marvellous attention to the discourse of his companion, without daring to hazard a word of reply, for fear of losing something he might say in the interim, at which his companion evidently was not ill pleased. In truth, it seemed that the more he beheld of the youth his modesty and discretion, the greater became his liking for him; and as he continued to point out the persons worthy of note, that were in the room, he looked as if his gratification therein increased with the increasing pleasure he afforded to his auditor.

"There is as goodly a group yonder as you will meet with in a playhouse," continued he; "it consisteth of young Ben Jonson, a veritable son of the muses, who promiseth to be better known than he is; my Lord Buckhurst, one who hath written a tragedy of some note, and loveth to spend his leisure upon players; Master Edmond Tilney, master of the queen's revels, a very proper gentleman, and a courteous, who hath the licensing of plays, and therefore cometh amongst us often; Dr. Thomas Lodge, and Dr. Thomas Legge, who have writ for our neighbor the Rose with a very fair success; and that pedantic and most conceited coxcomb Master John Lily, who hath invented many comedies, yet is like to get himself more laughed at than any of them. Ben Jonson—he that is standing up—seemeth to have the lion's share of the argument, as is his wont; for his tongue is a rattling famously; and I judge from that, the subject of dispute concerneth the ancients, for he prideth himself mightily upon his Greek and Latin. But here cometh my excellent good friend and patron Lord Southampton." At this he broke off, and his companion noticed a noble-looking gentleman, scarce older than himself, well attired, but not too fine in his appointments, who was advancing toward them with an easy courteousness, and a bland aspect.

"Well met, Master Shakspeare," said he, shaking hands with the other very cordially.

"I'faith, if your lordship be in as good health as am I," responded Master Shakspeare with a smile, "then are we 'well met,' indeed."

"Ever at it," exclaimed the Lord Southampton laughingly. "Surely there never was thy match at quibbles and quirks! Indeed, thou art a very juggler with words, and at the mere touch of thy wit canst give them any meaning that suits thee."

"In truth, my good lord," replied the other, "my poor words when addressed to you, however little their meaning may be, must needs have a good meaning, for they mean you well at all times; and such can not help but *suit* me, seeing that I take abundance of care they are brought forth on a *fitting* occasion."

"There, again!" cried my lord, laughing again very merrily. "Sure, never was the like! But I have just left her majesty, and rarely have I seen her in a more commendable humor. She doth applaud Burbage to the very echo, and hath laughed at Green till her sides ached for it. I tell thee, if thou canst please the higher powers so well, hast thou no cause to fear those foolish pragmatics of the city. Let them do what they list. I have spoken on thy behalf to mine honorable and most esteemed good friend, Sir Thomas Egerton, who, for learning in the law, hath no superior; and he hath promised me to exert himself for thy advantage. Keep a good heart. Knowing that thou hast the protection of Master Attorney-General, and art in such absolute favor at court, the aldermen, even if they have the power, the which have I my doubts of, shall not dare drive thee from the Blackfriars. Nay, I should take it in very monstrous hard case indeed, were a few paltry citizens allowed to interfere with the pleasures of so many worshipful lords and gentlemen as find excellent entertainment at the playhouse. Be of good cheer, Master Shakspeare—thou shalt never receive disadvantage at their hands."

"I am infinitely beholden to you, my good lord," said Master Shakspeare. "It is adding another leaf to that volume of favors your lordship's bountiful spirit hath accorded me."

"Take not what I have done for thee as anything," replied my Lord Southampton, putting his hand in a friendly way on the other's shoulder. "For, in honest truth, I am ashamed I have as yet been to thee of such exceeding poor service. Fain would I show in more substantial fashion how honorably I regard the manifold excellencies of thy nature; and be assured I will not rest till I do something to the purpose. But I must needs be gone, for I have a party

waiting, with whom is sweet Mistress Varnon; therefore, fare thee well, Master Shakspeare, till we meet again."

"All good attend you, my lord!" replied Master Shakspeare with a very earnest sincerity, as he saw his patron leave the room; then turning to his young friend, who had not lost a syllable of the preceding discourse, he exclaimed, "There is a truly noble spirit! he is none of your mere lords who can claim nothing of distinction but the names of their fathers—he is enrolled in nature's own peerage; and carrieth his patent of nobility in his heart. Truly are such an honor to the land; and the more England hath of them, the better able will she be to cope with her enemies. Though he hath so youthful a look, he is of a most manly nature. He is ever intent upon honorable purposes—thinketh that of all worshipful things intellect hath the supremacy—and seemeth ever ready to put his vantage of rank into obedience out of respect to the gifts, such as they be, which God hath grafted into my being. Indeed it be the knowledge of such notable dispositions that maketh me in love with humanity. I know of but one other like him, and him you shall see anon."

At this instant there entered at the door, laughing as if they had naught else in the world to do but to be merry, two of the players; the one, of whom the reader hath already had acquaintance, to wit, Richard Burbage, was dressed as the Prince Henry; the other, with a look of infinite drollery, in a suit of russet, with huge swollen belly and legs, did represent Sir John Falstaff; and he coming in did freely accost Master Shakspeare with a very "hail. fellow" slap on the back, exclaiming—"How now, Chanticleer? thou lookest as demure as an old maid that waketh in the night with a dream that she hath been kissed by a blackamoor."

"Go to—thou art Green!" replied Master Shakspeare in the same humor; "thou art Green by name and green by nature, therefore thy wit can not be ripe—and not being ripe must needs be sour. Go hang thyself on a sunshiny wall, and mayhap thou shalt in time become palatable."

"Away with thee, thou pestilent player upon words, and unprofitable player upon a stage," cried out the other, "dost think I'll hang at thy bidding? No—I'll be hanged if I do. Away! I am sick of thee."

"Then hast thou the Green sickness—which is marvellous to behold in one of thy appearance," replied Master Shakspeare.

"Now whip me this knave!" said Master Green, turning to his companion, who seemed as if he could not well maintain his gravity. "Here be a sorry fellow for you, who hath as many jests to a name as there are patches in a Jew's gaberdine. See how he abuseth the license of speech! Was ever such poor practices known since talking came into fashion?"

"Let him have his way, I prythee," observed Master Burbage: "he is but simple; and peradventure had he not his usual pastime he might die from the lack of it."

"Nay, if I die not till I lack sport, I shall keep my breath as long as"—here Master Shakspeare paused a bit, and then added archly—"as long as this exquisite world provideth such sweet facetious rogues as they that now serve me to break a jest upon."

"Out upon thee!" exclaimed the representative of Sir John Falstaff, good humoredly, "thou wilt come to no good, depend on't."

"How can I, forsooth, when such evil things as thou art, stop my way?" asked the other.

"I'faith thou hadst best not meddle with him," gravely remarked Master Burbage. "He is like unto the great bear in Paris garden—he worrieth the dogs more than the dogs worry him: a murrain on him."

"Show not thy teeth then, good dogs," added the other, with a smile.

"A fico for thee and all thy kind!" cried Master Green, "I will show my teeth in spite of thee—ay, and use them too if it seemeth me good."

"Doubtless, when such be thy humor, thou wouldst succeed in making a green wound—in virtue of thy name," retorted Master Shakspeare.

"Nay, if hanging be not too good for thee, burn me for a schismatic!" laughingly exclaimed his antagonist.

"In good truth, I do not think thou wouldst burn, Tom," coolly observed the one.

"Why not, Will?" inquired the other.

"Seeing that green wood doth not catch fire very readily," replied the first.

"What green again!" cried his droll companion, "why what a master of colors art thou who useth but one."

"Wouldst have him take thee for a chameleon, who can change his complexion as it suiteth his fancy?" asked Master Burbage.

"For the matter of that, he changeth his hue very much like your chameleon," said Master Shakspeare; "for if you catch him at the tavern, doubt not to find him a bottle Green"—

"Ha! ha!" shouted both at the same time.

"If he ventureth on the salt ocean, assuredly he is a sea Green"—

"Good, o'my life!" exclaimed Master Burbage, laughing very lustily.

"That he be not a Kendal or a Lincoln Green, I can warrant, knowing that he cometh from Warwickshire; but when all that is now man of him be turned into mould, there can not be a question that he will make a very respectable grass Green."

"Oh, kill me that varlet straight!" cried Master Green, shaking his monstrous stomach with the violence of his mirth. "Kill him, Dick, if thou lov'st me—for he hath filled me full of most villanous vegetable conceits. I do begin to fancy some old grannum, coming for simples, catching me up for a goodly pennyworth, and boiling me, as a sovereign remedy for her rheumatics."

"Nay, Tom, thou shalt be put to no such ignoble use, believe me," said Master Shakspeare, now laughing in his turn. "Green thou art, it can not be denied, and it be equally certain that thou wilt be ever-Green; therefore, if it pleaseth thee, when I seek the bays I will come to thee for as much as thou canst provide."

"Well said, bully rook!" replied the other, giving him another hearty slap on the back. "If thou dependest on me for thy laurels, thou shalt have good store of them—for I do believe that thou hast earned them well."

"So say I," added Master Burbage, with exceeding earnestness.

"But how goeth the play, my masters?" suddenly inquired Master Shakspeare, as if inclined to give a turn to the conversation.

"As well as anything can go that goeth upon legs," replied Master Green.

"But how doth a play go upon legs, Tom?" asked Burbage. "That conceit be out of all toleration."

"Not a whit, not a whit, Dick," answered the other—"'tis as plain as the nose on thy face; and I will do thee the justice to acknowledge that thou hast very 'plain' features."

"Out, thou pudding!" cried Burbage, laughing heartily; and fetching his companion a sly poke in the midriff, he thereupon gave a quick jump away, and went with a great bang against Master Aniseed, who coming strutting along in all his finery to ascertain what they were so merry upon, had got nigh upon Master Green, when he was sent by the suddenness of the concussion flying along as if he had been shot out of a culverin, knocking down Lords Dimple and Simple, scattering others to the right and to the left, and fetching Sir Narcissus Wrinkles with one of his outspread arms such a whack of the chaps, that it sent his periwig off unto the other end of the room. In an instant, half a dozen rapiers were drawn; and foremost of all, Sir Narcissus with his bald pate, and swearing in a monstrous passion, was advancing to where stood Master Aniseed, trying to catch his breath, and looking as if he knew not for a certainty whether he was on his head or on his heels. Others presently interposed to prevent bloodshed, but some would not be pacified so readily: and a good many were so provoked by the ridiculousness of the whole scene, that they could do nothing but laugh.

"Let me at him!" cried Sir Narcissus. "By Acheron and gloomy Styx, I'll teach him to play his tricks on me, I warrant you."

"'Sblood, I must kill him within the instant," shouted Captain Swagger, looking prodigiously fierce, and flourishing his rapier in a most sanguinary manner. "He hath given me a blow! nothing but his life can atone for't."

"By this light he dies, for he hath hurt my friend," exclaimed Lord Dimple, raising his head from the floor, and looking pathetically toward Lord Simple, who lay at his length a little distance off.

"Nay, I be not much damaged," replied the latter, slowly placing himself in a sitting position. "But if I trounce him not for the ill office he hath done thee, then is friendship but a name."

"Nay, Sir Narcissus, put up your weapon—it was but an accident," said Master Taylor.

"Ten thousand furies! let me at him, I say!" cried the enraged knight, vainly endeavoring to break from those who held him tight.

"Come, good captain, we must have no fighting here!" cried Master Lowing, who with others were trying to hold him back.

"Away, gentlemen!" bawled Captain Swagger. "He hath signed his own death warrant. He hath done me an offence. Hold me not, I pray you, for I must kill him."

"Who talks of killing?" cried Master Green, looking preposterously valiant and big, and coming in before Master Aniseed with a rapier of a tremendous length, which he had drawn from the scabbard at his side. "Is any man so weary of life as to stand before my invincible toasting iron?—then let him die now, and pray all the rest of his days. Am I not famed for the killing of giants, of griffins, dragons, and monsters horrid? Then pity be pitiless: puppies shall drown in pails, or I'll know the reason on't. My masters, before I let fly my valor and shave the world of its humanity, it seemeth to me good to say this much. So he that hath ears to hear, let him give me his ears—and if he be deaf, why, let him hold his tongue. Thus is it—Let it be known to you that the good youth who hath made all this turmoil, be in no way to blame, seeing that he was but an agent in the mischief of which he was the innocent cause; for thus stands the tale: I jumping back suddenly, not knowing such a person was so nigh at hand, came with all my force against him, and did force him, very unwillingly on his part, I will be bound for't, to do what hath excited your high displeasure. Now, mark this: it be an unquestionable truth, that no man is ever in a rage with the bullet that killeth him; but, doubtless, would be glad, if he could, to pay off the pestilent varlet who shot the bullet. Quarrel not, then, with the bullet in this business—but they whose indignations be unquenchable, let them at me—for I shot the bullet."

Shouts of laughter rose from all parts of the room during this discourse, but when the speaker, with his great, stuffed body and valiant looks, more laughable than terrible, began swinging his monstrous weapon about, jumping quickly here and there, and slashing on all sides with an abundance of ridiculous antics, they that were nighest to him made all haste to get out of his way; the rapiers were quickly sheathed, and such roars of laughter followed one another from all the company, that never was the like heard.

"I pray you, if you be good Christians, bury the dead quickly," observed Master Green, gravely putting up his weapon—at which every one laughed the more. "Indeed this be killing work," continued he, wiping his brows with his handkerchief, amid the shouts of all around him. "'Tis a thousand pities it be so fatiguing to the body, else would I slay as many score as I have done now, every day i' the year, and find it a very pretty diversion."

"Prythee, sweet friend, tell me if thy hurt be great!" asked Lord Dimple, leaning upon the shoulder of his associate, very anxiously; though, when he saw the great weapon coming into play a minute since, he jumped out of the way without in the least looking after his friend.

"In truth, my elbow be somewhat bruised," replied Lord Simple, with a right dolorous look. "But how is it with thee?"

"By this hand I am also a little hurt in the elbow," said he, very tenderly feeling his arm at the joint. "But I am villanous sore where I sit me down."

"Alack! I have there the most pestilent soreness true friend ever endured," replied the other, and immediately he did begin rubbing himself behind with a countenance that would have softened a heart of stone.

"And now, Tom, to the proofs," said Burbage, after the laughter had abated, and things became in the room near what they were before Master Aniseed's mishap, "How doth a play go upon legs?"

"Doth not a play go upon the players?" inquired Master Green.

"Of a truth, it can not well go without," observed the other.

"And do not the players go upon legs?" asked he.

"Truly, they could not well go without," remarked Master Shakspeare, with all his gravity.

"Well, then, my masters, dost see the drift of my argument?" said Green. "If the play be supported by the players, and the players be supported by their legs, is it not as true as that chickens come out of egg-shells, that a play goeth upon legs?"

"I question not that if the play 'stand' at all, it shall have legs to stand upon," observed Master Shakspeare in the same humor; "but I doubt hugely, that the play and the players go together at all times: for it may chance that the players be 'damned,'—which is like enough of some of them that I know; but the damning of the play doth not follow—especially if it be one of mine."

"Out upon thee, thou intolerable piece of vanity and horrible calumniator!" cried Master Green, laughing all the time; "I will forswear thy company, and on the instant take myself off."

"Do so, Tom," replied Master Shak-

speare, as his friend was leaving him—"thou wilt save me an infinite world of trouble by it, for I have been taking thee off this many a day."

"I owe thee one for that!" emphatically exclaimed the other, turning round as he was going out at the door, and shaking his droll face at him very merrily; "and if I pay thee not, Will, thou shalt hold me in no more estimation than a soused gurnet."

"Away with thee! thou wilt never become half so dainty a piece of pickle!" retorted his companion.

When Green was gone Master Shakspeare did address Burbage in his usual playful manner, with—"Well, Dick, did the verses play the part thou wouldst have them?"

"Excellently well," replied he. "In truth, never verses had better reception. If she be not an exquisite judge of all the commodities of a good measure, then stand I on very indifferent footing with a pretty woman."

"I'faith, thy feet have but an indifferent appearance, Dick," said Master Shakspeare, gravely looking down upon the other's shoes.

"That must needs become a standing joke," observed his companion.

"It may, for I do not think it deserves to be set down."

"Go too!" exclaimed Master Burbage, jocularly. "But listen to me: I watched her the while she read thy poem, and believe me, her face be worth the looking at: and as she proceeded, she opened her pretty lips—a tempting pair, by this light!—and said, 'That is not ill'—and anon, "brave words!' and presently, 'an excellent good conceit;' and thus went she till she came to the end—when she did acknowledge that they were of better stuff than she had expected of me."

"Then must she have had a marvellous bad opinion of thee," duly remarked his companion, "and evidently knew thy value to a fraction. But what didst get for them?"

"Dost think I kiss and tell?" said the other, in a seeming indignation. "But I tell thee how it is, Will—I have cut out him of the sonnet—he hath no more chance than a drowned kitten in Houndsditch. And our next assignation hath a very pretty conceit in it—for it is agreed between us that I shall come to her door; and to prevent mistakes, when she says 'Who's there?' at my knocking, I am to reply, 'It is I—Richard the Third.'"

"What, dost mean to play the tyrant with her?" laughingly inquired Master Shakspeare. "But let not thy longings for her father's gold make thee too sanguine. Mayhap thou wilt find plenty of Richmonds in the field yet."

"I care not if there be—I am desperately in love; and if she is to be had, will have her in spite of them," replied Master Burbage. "But there is our Stentor, with his lungs o' leather, giving me a pretty loud hint that I am wanted—so I am off." Saying which, he hastily departed at the door.

"And how like you the players and their associates?" asked Master Shakspeare to his young companion.

"In truth, exceeding well," replied Master Francis, cheerfully; "never have I been so much amused as during the time I have been here. Methinks they must lead a right merry life."

"They are the very grasshoppers of the age," observed his friend: "a small matter of sunshine sufficeth to make them chirp; notwithstanding which they oftimes live in fear of being trodden under foot, or snapped up by such as think fit to devour them and their substance." Doubtless in this Master Shakspeare did allude to the efforts that had been made by the city authorities to deprive himself and his associates of performing plays within their jurisdiction.

After some time longer passed in the room, his friend did lead Master Francis out just as many of the players came in, denoting that the play was over; and after carefully picking his way along, he was brought before a large curtain, in the which there was a hole whereat Master Shakspeare took a peep, and desired his companion to do the same. He looked, and saw a throng of people of the respectable sort, standing up close together a little below him, while a vast number of rooms, all round about and above them, were filled with lords and ladies, and the like, very splendidly attired; and up higher, on "the scaffold," or gallery, were a crowd of the meaner kind, who could afford neither a shilling nor a sixpence, such as had been paid by "the groundlings," and those in the rooms, but came only as threepenny customers. All was open to the sky, and at the top was a great flag. But what struck him the most was the noise and hubbub of the people. Some were shouting "God save the queen!" others casting up their hats, and the ladies waved their handkerchiefs; and turning his eyes to where the looks of the audience were directed, Master

Francis beheld, in the largest of the rooms, all daintily fitted up with curtains of satin and gold, her majesty, Queen Elizabeth, who, with a very queen-like dignity, had presented herself in front of her noble attendants, clad with princely magnificence, and continued most graciously to courtesy to her applauding subjects.

He had not been many minutes engaged in observing this interesting scene, from the attractions of which he could scarcely take off his eyes, when he felt himself touched on the shoulder, and turning round, saw a handsome and gallant looking gentleman approaching the place where he stood.

"I have been in constant expectation of seeing you, Sir Walter"——

"Speed thee, Master Shakspeare, and follow me," said the other, interrupting him quickly.

"I must first request your kind offices in favor of my young friend here, who is a youth of excellent parts and"——

"Let him come to me at Durham house to-morrow, at eleven o'clock," said he, "for, in truth, I have not a minute to lose now. Her majesty hath desired that thou shouldst be presented to her, and if we make not prodigious haste she will be gone."

"Be sure and go to Durham house, as Sir Walter Raleigh hath required, and thou wilt find thy advantage in it," whispered Master Shakspeare; and in a moment afterward Master Francis found himself alone. For a minute or two it seemed to him that all had passed as a dream. It appeared scarcely possible that he should have stood in the presence of the far-famed Sir Walter Raleigh—have been recommended to his patronage, and desired of him to call at his mansion: and it could not but be (so he thought) that the stately looking gentleman, so richly clad, who a moment since stood before him, was a mere delusion of the fancy. These reflections threw him into a profound revery, in the which he was so completely lost, that he saw and heard nothing around him.

"Prythee tell me, what have they offered thee a week?" was asked him a third time before he noticed that the ill-favored and inquisitive knave, Gib the call-boy, with his enormous mouth upon the stretch, and his eyes squinting more abominably than ever, was at his elbow, wondering that he could get no answer.

"Hold thy prate—I know not," was the reply.

"Nay, if thou knowest not, thou canst not tell, of a surety," observed the call-boy. "But thou canst think without knowing, and therefore say, I prythee, what thou dost *think* they have offered thee?"

"What matters it to thee," replied the other, in spite of himself, amused at the coaxing, wheedling manner in which the bandy-legged urchin attempted to win the important secret from him.

"In honest truth, I am curious to know if they are inclined to give thee as much as a whole shilling a week and find thyself out on't," said the boy, holding up his head with such an affectation of conceit that the other could not help laughing in his face.

"Then, in honest truth, I believe they are not," responded Master Francis.

"I thought so," said Gib, with an air of satisfaction that increased the mirth of his companion—then added, in a tone of consolation, "Be not cast down at it. I do assure thee, that if thou wilt abide by my advice, and do the women, thou shalt get as much as that in good time; for truly thou art well fitted for playing in such parts, seeing that thou wilt have no call for a beard yet awhile, and when it doth appear in any sort of prodigality, I have an honest barber of my acquaintance who shall pluck each individual hair out by the roots, and charge thee little or nothing for it."

"I am obliged to thee infinitely," seriously observed the youth, who winced under the very idea of such torture. "I tell thee, once for all, I never had any desire of becoming a player, and all the service I require of thee, is to lead me out of this place as quickly as thou canst."

"Desirest thou not to become a player?" thundered out the astonished call-boy. "Well, here is a fortune thrown away! And I did hope thou wouldst have supplanted our Juliet, who, no later than yesterday, gave me a villanous kick i' the breech for offering to show him how to die more graceful than is his wont."

"And I will give thee another if thou dost not instantly lead me into the street," added Master Francis, looking as seriously as he could. At this the eyes of the call-boy seemed directed in every way at the same time; and without saying a word more, he began to shuffle his mis-shapen legs away as fast as he could,—closely followed by the other.

While those two were leaving the

playhouse, Sir Walter Raleigh was hurrying Master Shakspeare along, and they arrived at the queen's room just as her majesty was moving to depart, with all her noble train of lords and ladies around her.

"Please your majesty, here is Master William Shakspeare," said Sir Walter Raleigh, as he pushed through the throng.

"Let him enter," said the queen. Thereupon, Master Shakspeare advanced toward the queen and knelt before her; and her majesty and many of her courtiers—especially the ladies, did look upon him very curiously.

"Master Shakspeare," exclaimed the queen, "We do commend the excellence of your wit, whereof the application hath pleased us much, on more occasions than the present; and will take care you suffer no hinderance in your calling, so long as you continue as you have done, to attempt not to meddle with matters of state. Of all your performances, that fat knight hath delighted us in the greatest measure: and it seemeth that we should find an additional satisfaction could we see the rogue in love. Think of it, Master Shakspeare, and if your conceit jump that way, send word to the palace, and we will give you the first fitting opportunity to read to us whatever you may write upon the subject." Then graciously giving him her ungloved hand all brilliant with jewels, to which he respectfully bent his lips, her majesty passed him by, followed by her maids of honor, her officers in waiting, and others whose duty it was to attend upon her person, leaving Master Shakspeare kneeling, from which he presently rose, and in a few minutes heard the trumpets and kettle-drums, with the hurrahs of the mob outside, striking up as the queen left the playhouse in her caroch.

CHAPTER VIII.

Millions of yeares this old drivell Cupid lives;
While still more wretch, more wicked he doth prove;
Till now at length that Jove an office gives,
(At Juno's suite who much did Argus love)
In this our world a hangman for to be
Of all those fooles that will have all they see.
SIR PHILIP SIDNEY.

There are sort of men, whose visages
Do cream and mantle like a standing pond,
And do a wilfull stillness entertain
With purpose to be dressed in an opinion
Of wisdom, gravity, profound conceit;
As who should say, I am Sir Oracle,
And when I ope my lips let no dog bark.
SHAKSPEARE.

"COME, coz! coz! Prythee have done with this sighing and trembling," exclaimed Mistress Alice to her fair cousin, as they were together in their tiring-room, seemingly getting themselves ready to go upon a journey. "Why, thou makest as much fuss at being married as might I, for whom the idea of it hath but sorry recommendation indeed. Well, Heaven help them that can not help themselves, say I—and of all that need help, none are like your would-be wife; for of a truth, she must be in monstrous hard case, that desireth so ridiculous a thing as a husband."

"He can not help being ruined," observed Mistress Throckmorton sorrowfully, and quite inattentive to the remarks of her merry kinswoman.

"Well, blame him not for it," said the other, in her pretty droll way. "For, if he can not help it, he should escape censure. But methinks there be no great cause for such apprehension, for when I showed thy father's letter to the queen requesting thy presence at Aldgate, on the pretence of his declining health; she had come from the play in so fine a humor, that it seemed as if she could have granted anything: therefore art thou to go, and I with thee: and if thy man animal fail thee not, thou wilt be made his yoke-fellow straight. Now have I very palpably in my mind's eye, the appearance of thyself and thy precious helpmate some two or three score of years hence. Thou wilt sit on one side of the chimney corner, and he on the other, like Darby and Joan: with, mayhap, the cat at thy feet, and the dog at his, and his worship lifting up his woollen nightcap to scratch his bald pate the whilst, shall say, in a monstrous thin voice, like a sucking beetle," here did she imitate an old man's querulous speech to the life—"'Dame! it be woundy cold o' nights—hast never another pair o' hose to cover up my legs?' And then thou shalt look at his shrunk shanks very pitifully over thy spectacles, and dividing thy nose and chin, which shall then be nigh unto kissing each other, shalt answer, 'Forsooth, my old man, 'tis but proper thou shouldst have another pair; for I know by the absolute shooting o' my corns, we shall have foul weather soon.'"

"Fie on thee, Alice!" exclaimed Mistress Elizabeth, yet scarcely able to refrain from joining in her companion's

merriment—for the little creature screwed her pretty face into so odd an expression—and made her voice sound so tremulous and droll, in accordance with the laughable scene she was describing, that it was impossible for any one to have looked on unmoved.

"And then being mightily skilful in the preparation of simples," continued Alice very archly. "After having put him to bed and tucked him up, that the cold shall not visit his old bones too roughly—for I prythee remember, there shall be nothing of him but skin and bone—thou shalt make him a famous posset, with spice in it, to comfort his poor bowels—whereof, when he hath swallowed a sufficiency, thou shalt take the rest; then to bed with him—and a few minutes after which, thou shalt be heard snoring a fine treble as an accompaniment to his worship's excellent bass."

"Nay, I am ashamed of thee!" cried the other, although she could in no way help laughing at the conceit, in spite of the trouble she seemed to be in. "But haste thee, Alice, with our things, or my father will have to wait—which thou knowest he likes not. Ah, me—I would it were all over!"

"Ah, me—I would it were well over, or under either, so that it had a good ending," said Alice, briskly. "By my troth, there must needs be something in this taking of a husband, by the to do which is made of it; though, methinks, it would require as great a conjuror as Dr. Dee, to find out where lieth the wonder. For mine own part, I can not but help believing, that these man animals are hugely flattered—seeing that we are inclined to make so great a fuss out of so small a matter."

"He will be undone!" exclaimed Mistress Elizabeth sighing, and wringing her hands.

"A pudding undone!" cried Alice, her sparkling eyes flashing very merrily. "Why should he be undone, I prythee?—unless he undo himself; and then mayhap he shall get himself in a tanglement, like the fag-end of a ball of worsted in the paws of a kitten. I tell thee, Bess, he shall never be undone. There is that in him which will put up with no undoing. Think not of it. It can not be. Thou shalt find him like a very pretty skein of silk, as he is; and shalt wind him off clear to the end."

"It was noble of him to offer to marry me," said Mistress Throckmorton—somewhat as it were to herself.

"Nay, I can not see it be so very noble either," replied her laughing cousin; "truly thou art worthy to mate with as good as he—or better, if it come to that."

"No, no, no!" cried Mistress Elizabeth, shaking her head in very woful fashion.

"But I say yes, yes, yes!" quickly exclaimed the other. "In all respects he hath got an excellent bargain, and the varlet knoweth it, or I be much deceived. Thou shouldst not hold thyself too cheap, Bess; a woman gets nothing by that, depend on't. As for me, if there be any that would have me at mine own valuation, then shall they coin all the man's flesh that may be met with above ground into rose nobles; and lack the greatest portion of what I would go for after all."

"In truth, then, thou wouldst go at a priee indeed," remarked her cousin.

"Price, quotha! why should I not go at a price?" replied the merry Alice, tossing her little head very prettily. "Dost think I am but a pennyworth?—of so little account, that he that gets me might run a withy through my gills, and carry me home like a cheap mackerel?"

"Nay, I meant not that," said Mistress Elizabeth, smiling at the exceeding oddity of her cousin's humor.

"Thou art not held so poorly in my esteem, believe me; for thou hast ever been to me a very dear good creature," and thereat she stooped and kissed her rosy dimpled cheek with an admirable affection.

"Ay, if I am to be bought, I'll be a dear creature to him that buys me, depend on't," laughingly answered she, as she returned her cousin's caress. "But hark—here comes a footstep!" Saying this, she hastened to the door, the which she opened as some one approached it, and noticing that it was one of the yeomen of the guard, she exclaimed, "Ha, Master Annesley, what news?"

"Please you, my lady," replied he very respectfully, "there be certain of Sir Nicholas Throckmorton's serving-men down below, who say that the barge is ready at the water-side for Mistress Elizabeth and yourself, to the which they wait to conduct you."

"See that they be entertained; and say we will be with them anon, Master Annesley," said Alice.

"I will, my lady," answered he; and departed quickly to do her bidding.

"Bess! Bess! why how thou dost tremble!" exclaimed the other, when she had returned to her kinswoman. "Dost tremble at a man?—Psha! Fifty men should

not make me wag a hair of my head. Now on with thy mantle!"

"Alas! he will be ruined!" cried Mistress Elizabeth very piteously.

"Then the more goose he!" replied her cousin. "But I apprehend he hath more wit than to suffer it. Dost think *I* would be ruined?—Nay, I'd eat my head off first! Come, here is thy hat. Alack, thou lookst as pale as a Shrovetide pancake. Courage, sweetheart! If it were not that I have no inclination that way, I would marry all the bachelors between this and Muscovy, and not be frightened a whit. Nay, shake not so, I prythee, for thou wilt have shaking enough soon, I doubt not—seeing that when we get to London Bridge thou wilt have to mount on the pillion on uncle's brown Bess, whilst I must ride before Diggory on the gray mare; and then we shall go trot, trot, trot, to Aldgate, till neither of us have more bowels than a flea. And now thou art ready at last."

Then, after some few minutes employed in finishing her own attire—for her beautiful kinswoman seemed in such a strait that she could assist her none at all—she drew her arm through that of the other, cheering her all the time with many droll sayings; and they passed together out of the room in their travelling equipments, giving notice as they went to one of the yeomen that the men should meet them near the gates; thereat when they arrived, they found the serving-men in their best liveries (proper stout varlets, each with a goodly rapier at his girdle), and with abundance of respectful salutations from them, answered kindly and without haughtiness by their fair mistress, thus attended, they left the palace of Whitehall, and proceeded across the Queen's garden to the Privy bridge.

"Step in quick," said a voice that came from one muffled up close in a large cloak, who sat in the barge at the waterside.

"Father!" exclaimed Mistress Elizabeth.

"Uncle!" cried Alice in the same breath.

"Nay, there be no time for fathers or uncles either," replied Sir Nicholas, "I be not to speak nor disclose myself for fear of watchers and praters,—so in, wench, and quickly. And now, Diggory, push off from the shore, and help ply the oars well."

"That will I, your worship," replied one with a famous dull honest face and yellow beard, who with a long pole sought to push the barge into deep water; "and as your worship desireth that your name shall not be mentioned, I will take care it pass not my lips. Truly 'twould be a shame were I not to do the bidding of so excellent a master as Sir Nicholas Throck——"

"Hang thee, villain, thou wouldst betray me upon the instant!" exclaimed the old knight. "Take to thy oar, and let thy tongue wag on thy peril."

"I am dumb, Sir Nichol——"

"Take that, for a prating varlet!" said his master, interrupting the mentioning of his name by a blow with an ashen stick he had under his cloak; that not only made Diggory wince mightily, but had the effect of silencing him without another word.

"Nay, father!"

"Hurt him not, good uncle!" cried the cousins quickly, as they saw the weapon descending.

"'Sblood! one might as well be proclaimed at Paul's!" exclaimed Sir Nicholas impatiently. "I tell thee I am now neither thy father, nor thy uncle, nor thy ox, nor thy ass, nor anything that is thine."

They now glided slowly and in silence along the river, keeping pretty nigh unto the left bank—the serving men straining at the oars with all their strength—Mistress Elizabeth trembling exceedingly, and her beautiful countenance marked with a great paleness; and Alice with her arm round her waist, whispering excellent consolation, with now and then such droll conceits as entered into her head.

"Who be those getting into a pair of oars from the very spot where we took water?" inquired Sir Nicholas, pointing to two persons closely wrapped in large cloaks, who were then stepping into a boat.

"Methinks they are men of some sort," replied Diggory, with a monstrous gravity, who fancying the question had been addressed to him, had plucked up courage to answer it.

"Mine eyes can tell me that," said his master, drily.

"And wear they goodly coptanck hats, out of all question," continued the man.

"That also I can see without thy assistance," answered the old knight. "I hope they be not coming after us."

"They are pulling across the river," observed Alice.

"That is evident to me likewise," responded Sir Nicholas; and for some min-

utes not a word more was spoken, till he cried out,—"but see, they are creeping along the shore on the other side. Odds my life! but I think they be spies."

"If it please you, shall we run across?" said Diggory, "and Peter and I will draw upon them, and spoil their spying straight."

"Ay, that would we, with a vengeance, if it please you, master," exclaimed another, whose patch on the forehead betokened him to be one in no way averse to a broil.

"Peace, knaves," exclaimed the old knight;—"Dost think, if there be any need of drawing, I can not play my part?"

"For the matter of that," observed Diggory, "I can affirm, with a safe conscience, there be no such a master at the weapon."

"Indeed, for a swashing blow, of all valorous knights commend me to Sir Nicholas Throck——: Oh!" shouted Peter, before he had finished his sentence, on finding the aforesaid ashen stick descending on his pate, with the very swashing blow he was speaking of.

"Wilt never hold thy prate?" angrily cried his master: "nay, by God's suffering, I'll give thee a cudgeling all round, if I hear another word." At this the men said no more, but pulled on, passing divers noble mansions that stood on the slope of the Thames, nigh unto the village of Charing, Sir Nicholas watching very earnestly the strange boat, that kept at a good distance on the other side of the river, till they approached Ivy Bridge; when he commanded Diggory to make for a small flight of stone steps, adjutting out of a magnificent mansion that stood there. As it was high water, the barge was easily brought to the stairs, and then the old knight, handing out his daughter and his niece, pointed to them an open door above the wall, against which the tide was a running, for them to go into, while he tarried a moment to give directions to his men.

"Courage, Bess! this is Durham house, and thou wilt soon be a wife now," exclaimed Alice, as the other, seeming more dead than alive, leaned upon her, as they advanced through the little door, into a dark passage. "At least Sir Walter Raleigh hath one virtue—he hath a goodly house to live in."

"To which he now welcomes his dear sweet wife and thee," said a well-known voice; and Mistress Elizabeth found herself clasped in the arms of her affianced husband.

"Oh, Walter!" was all she could say.

"Alack, I had like to have been frightened," exclaimed Alice; "but now I see who it be, I only wonder I took any alarm, for I am not easily frightened at so small a matter."

"Another time, Alice, I will give it thee in good style for that," said Sir Walter, laughingly; and then, turning to Mistress Elizabeth, added, "Come, Bess, to the chapel—all is ready; my chaplain waits, and there is no one with him but my friend Lord Cobham."

"And here comes her old father, to see her honorably wedded to a truly excellent and gallant gentleman," cried Sir Nicholas Throckmorton, a little way behind them.

"Welcome to Durham house, Sir Nicholas," exclaimed Raleigh: and then the two knights shook hands in a very friendly manner.

"Thanks, Sir Walter," replied the other; "I have brought Bess here, with strict attention to your directions; yet had I at one time misgivings we were watched."

"Who could have thought of playing the spy upon you?" asked Raleigh.

"In truth it was a mistake of mine," replied the old knight; "for the boat in which were the supposed watchers hath but now gone on, as I think, to the Bankside."

"I beseech you, follow me then to the chapel," said Sir Walter; and then, with many kind and soothing words to her who hung so fondly on his arm, he led the way, closely followed by Alice and her uncle, through many courts and passages, till they came to a sort of oratory, dimly lighted, fitted up in very antique fashion as a place of worship; in the which stood, in his robes, at the altar, the chaplain, conversing with my Lord Cobham; and with a few hurried words of greeting betwixt that lord and Sir Nicholas Throckmorton, the ceremony was proceeded with; Mistress Elizabeth looking all the whilst, as some thought, fitter for a burial than a bridal, and trembling wonderfully; but she said the responses with a proper distinctness; and in a marvellous little time she did receive the congratulations of those around her. She answered not to what was said, save by turning toward her husband, and with her beautiful eyes swimming in their own soft light, regarded him with a look of such infinite thankfulness, that it sunk direct to his heart, and never, while he had life, was thence erased.

"And now, Sir Nicholas Throckmorton," said Sir Walter, advancing to him, with his arm fondly encircling his wife, "I consign this precious charge into your keeping for a while, which I hope will be but brief. I am going, as it may be known unto you, upon a voyage, whereof, the successful result will, I hope, win me the queen's pardon for this proceeding; and I know not where, with such excellent propriety and advantage, I could place in safety, during my absence, what I account so great a treasure, as with one from whom its value did proceed. I pray you look to her tenderly."

"That will I, Sir Walter, depend on't," replied the old knight, briskly. "A murrain on thee; what dost look so pale for?" added he to his daughter;—"when I married thy mother, her cheek outblushed the rose:—but there will come color enough by-and-by, or I'm hugely mistaken;" and then he gave a very merry chuckle, and did touch her playfully under the chin.

"It grieveth me that I should seem to play the niggard, Sir Nicholas," said Sir Walter; "but it must be known to you why it is so; and therefore do I trust you will excuse it."

"Odds my life, man, speak not of it," answered Sir Nicholas; "but if thou canst, come to us this eve at Aldgate, and we will have a merry night on't."

"I will strive to bring it about," replied Sir Walter.

"Art admiring my apparel, fair Alice?" asked my Lord Cobham, with a great show of gallantry, as he advanced toward the place where she, with her roguish eyes, seemed intently scrutinizing his dress.

"Indeed it hath to me a right handsome look," replied she, very innocently; "but methinks it be a thousand pities it should have so sorry a lining."

"'Tis a mad wench, 'tis a mad wench!" exclaimed the old knight, with a loud laugh, while my Lord Cobham appeared as if he knew not whether to be offended or amused; "she hath a lively wit, it can not be denied; and they do say she taketh after me."

"The truth of which I here do affirm," said the merry girl; "for having many a day helped yourself before me, it standeth to reason, uncle, that I must take after you."

"Ha, ha!" shouted her kinsman, who seemed as fond of a jest as herself, "that be a truth beyond all contradiction. Now, Sir Walter, you take the lead, else I know not how I shall find my way back to the barge." Raleigh was whispering a few encouraging words to his beautiful wife, previous to his departure, when he was startled by a knocking at the chapel door.

"Now, Stephen, what news?" asked he, going to the door, yet without opening it.

"Please you, Sir Walter," replied the voice of an old man, "there is my Lord Burghley at the gate, who says he must have immediate speech with you on the queen's business."

"Get him into the library, good Stephen," said Raleigh, "and say that I am dressing, and will be with him in the instant."

"That will I, without fail," responded the other, and immediately he was heard hastening away.

"Now, Bess, my life," exclaimed Sir Walter, catching hold of her arm, "I must be so ungallant as to hurry thee from the house; for if the lord treasurer were to get but a hint of thy being here, it must needs come to the queen's ears, and then it would go hard for us both." So saying, he hastened with her—not without saying many endearing words by the way, which doubtless were mightily refreshing to her affectionate nature—to the little door that opened unto the river; at the which he parted with her, and her father, and Alice; who straightway proceeded into their barge, and continued their journey, while he hurried back; and after going through other passages, and up a flight of steps, joined his visiter in the library.

The Lord Burghley was at the time a man getting to be aged, and of some infirmities also. His beard was very silvery, and broad at the bottom; and his face much wrinkled, pale, and of an exceeding grave aspect; his head, which seemed to be scant of hair, was covered with a close cap of black velvet (whereof the points came down over his ears), on the top of which was a rounded hat, with a fair jewel set in the centre. Below his ruff his gown was fastened, having the royal arms embroidered on the right side; over which he wore a goodly chain of gold, and a broad sash, from the left shoulder to the right hip; and in his hand he carried a white wand. He had sat himself down in an easy-chair, the which a tall, thin, gray-headed old serving-man, who stooped much, had placed for his use; and seemed, with marvellous shrewd looks, to be scrutinizing ev-

ything in the room; and certes there was a multitude of things opposite in their natures, the close approximation of the which would have been a marvel to many: for above a vast heap of romances of love, and chivalry, and the like, was the model of a ship;—then, upon a pile of grave philosophers and ancient historians, there peeped out a portion of a quaint dress for a masque;—here lay a theorbo, and by it a small piece of ordnance;—there a silver tankard, wrought with the story of Bacchus and Ariadne. Ovid's Art of Love lay on a shelf, with a jewelled dagger in it to mark the page; and between the leaves of Plato his works, in the original Greek, was seen part of the gold case of a lady's miniature. In one corner were divers pikes and halberds, with a torn banner taken from the enemy; in the other, a mass of ore, brought from the country of Guiana by a Spaniard, and one or two large shells found on the American shore;—in this, a right handsome arbalest, the handle of which was of ivory, very daintily carved,—with a quiver full of arrows; and in that a lot of swords, pieces, and the like sanguinary weapons, resting upon a roll of madrigals, with a leaf exposed, having on it part of the words and music of that admirable composition of the truly melodious Master Dowland, "Awake, sweet Love." On parts of the carved wainscot, were framed and hung up certain views of the invincible armada being discomfited by the English fleet—charts of the Spanish main—drawings of the coast of Virginia—and a right exquisite portrait of Queen Elizabeth, looking wondrous handsome and majestical, riding upon horseback, as she appeared at Tilbury Fort. There was no lack of tables and chairs in the room, but most of them were covered with such a host of ancient books and weapons, with here and there a case of toothpicks, or a delicate pouncet box;—pistols and perfumes lying side by side, or a French trinket resting upon a Hebrew psalter, with a vast quantity of papers, as would be tedious to describe minutely.

"My master will be with you anon, an' it please you, my lord," said the old serving-man, very respectfully.

"Humph!" exclaimed the lord treasurer, drawing in his lips very tight, and still regarding everything about him with an unmoved countenance.

"He is but now a dressing, and bade me say that he would not lose an instant in the coming."

"Ho!" ejaculated my Lord Burghley, lowering his chin and throwing out his lips.

"And for a surety, he is always to be depended upon in his word, an' it please you, my lord," continued the other. "For though I have served him since he hath been but a boy as it were, never knew I him to fail in the keeping of it."

"Ha!" cried the old lord, nodding his head with a sort of complacency.

"And when he employeth himself on the business of the queen—to whom be all honor and glory in this world and the next," added Stephen reverentially, and proud to be allowed to have speech with the great Lord Burghley—"I have known him to be quite put out should there be any let which would delay him but a moment."

"Humph!" exclaimed my lord, still very gravely.

"Therefore, it be certain, out of all contradiction, he will be here straight; an' it please you, my lord."

"Ho!" said the lord treasurer.

"And, here he is," concluded the serving-man, as he heard his master's footstep approaching the door.

"Ha!" cried my Lord Burghley. Thereupon, Stephen respectfully went out as Sir Walter Raleigh entered. The lord treasurer budged not an inch as the other approached him, nor spoke a word, nor altered he his countenance, nor took he off his hat.

"I have first to thank you, my good lord, for the honor you have done me—in paying my poor house a visit," said Sir Walter, drawing a chair close to his guest, and sitting himself therein. "For, truly, may it be said, that where the Lord Burghley cometh, he bringeth honor with him—for he bringeth the superlatively wisest statesman of his age, which I take to be the honorablest of all titles of honor."

"Humph!" exclaimed the lord treasurer.

"And, next," continued his host, "I must make my excuses for keeping you waiting—but I made not the stop any longer than I could help for mine own sake, believe me; for know I well, that every minute that keepeth me from such excellent good society, depriveth me of more true wisdom than a week's hard study could make up."

"Ho!" ejaculated the other.

"The queen, out of her own bountiful humor, hath given me expectation of your coming," added Sir Walter, "de-

siring me to put you in possession of certain matters touching my expedition to Panama, in the which I intend doing the villanous Spaniards great hurt, and coming back, fear not that I shall fail in despoiling them of the Plate fleet—to the exceeding enrichment of her majesty's exchequer."

"Ha!" cried Lord Burghley.

"The matter stands thus—the gentlemen adventurers who with me have subscribed the necessary moneys for this golden undertaking, with her majesty's high sanction, have promoted me to be their admiral: and I, desirous that its good effects should not fail for want of a sufficiency of means, did seek of her majesty, on profitable conditions, such assistance in men, ships, and warlike stores, as seemed unto me to be necessary."

"Humph!" exclaimed the lord treasurer.

"And her majesty, with exceeding liberality, as I take it, hath condescended to promise me six of her ships, well appointed in all respects, under the command of Sir John Burgh, who is to be our vice-admiral."

"Ho!" cried the old lord.

"For the which we are willing to allow her one half of the profits of the expedition, arising either from the plunder of the town, or the taking of ships—which, doubtless, will amount to a sum far exceeding that which has been gained by any similar adventure."

"Ha!" said my Lord Burghley.

Sir Walter Raleigh then, at considerable length, described the nature of the proposed undertaking, its manifest advantages,—the number of ships and men to be employed—the officers engaged, and all concerning the expedition to the minutest particular; to the which the lord treasurer not only listened with his gravity undisturbed; but drawing in his mouth tight, as if he were afraid something should drop out of it, he replied only with a "Humph!" a "Ho!" or a "Ha!" as the case might be. It be out of all manner of doubt that my Lord Burghley could speak right eloquently when he chose; but he was exceeding chary of his discourse when he fancied it was not necessary for him to open his lips. Thus did he preserve the wonderful taciturnity with which he was gifted, throughout the whole of the time; and looking very grave the whilst, as if he was taken up with some deep thinking, with a slight inclination of his head, he raised himself from the chair, and leaning on his host for support, he walked to the gates, where he mounted his pony which a serving-man had in waiting for him, and immediately rode off.

CHAPTER IX.

Sir, you did take me up, when I was nothing;
And only yet am something by being yours,
You trusted me unknown; and that which were apt
To construe a simple innocence in me
Perhaps, might have been craft; the cunning of a boy
Hardened in lives and theft: yet ventured you
To part my miseries and me.

BEAUMONT AND FLETCHER.

To such a place our camp remove
As will no siege abide;
I hate a fool who starves her love
Only to feed her pride.

SIR JOHN SUCKLING.

MASTER FRANCIS was so well pleased with his visit to the playhouse, that when he returned to St. Mary Axe, he cared not a fig's end for the rating that the old man gave him for having tarried so long; and after he laid him down on his humble pallet of rushes, he could not sleep a wink for thinking of the gallant Sir Walter Raleigh and the noble Shakspeare; the brave sight he had of Queen Elizabeth, and all the fine lords and ladies, knights and gentlemen; and the droll things he had seen among the players; and then he sat about building of castles in the air, whereof he pleased himself mightily; for though of a modest disposition,—the which accorded well with the humbleness of his fortunes since he had recollection;—yet the mystery of his parentage sometimes inclining him to believe himself of notable descent, and at other times filling him with a dread that he was the deserted offspring of some wretched adventurer, made him irritable upon any slight, and more proud than seemed becoming to one of his state. His nature was very affectionate without doubt, yet was he exceeding sensitive of offence, and the excess of regard with which he looked on those who did him a kindness, disposed him the more readily to yield himself to impressions of an opposite tendency. I say thus much here, to put the courteous reader on his guard against expecting too much of him; for I am not one of those that bring on the picture such monstrous perfect creatures as do some, the like of which hath eye never seen in this world; for I put not finer feathers on the

bird than nature hath given him. If he hath faults, all the better,—for being of tender years, then is there the greater chance that he may mend. But, mayhap, this shall be seen in the upshot.

The cock had crowed more than once, yet still Master Francis continued at his airy speculations—this moment did he discover his unknown parent to be of great estate, and publicly was acknowledged to be his only son and heir, with the great rejoicing of a fine assembly—then, all daintily attired, he was a taking his leisure in a fair pleasance, with his adored Joanna, very lovingly, having his true friend, Harry Daring, in the background, after he had been doing of a good office even unto his much misliked acquaintance, Ralph Goshawk—again he was with Master Shakspeare and the players, receiving their congratulations on the success of a tragedy they had brought out for him, which had taken hugely with the spectators—and now he was with Sir Walter Raleigh in some place of office at court, discoursing very prettily on matters of state, and bearing it among the gallants as bravely as the best of them. Thus passed he the time till he was stirred up by the shrill voice of his uncle from below stairs, abusing him soundly for a lie-a-bed; at the which he got up and employed himself at the necessary drudgery of his miserly kinsman, till it was nigh unto the hour he was desired to go to Durham House, when, seeking occasion to be sent of an errand, in the which he succeeded so far as to be required to importune one who lacked the will or the means of paying—a thing he was oft obliged to do, yet never had any heart for—he proceeded on his way.

He had passed beyond the Temple Bar before the anxiousness which he was in allowed him to notice much what happened as he went, or the notable places in his progress; but as he now thought of the necessity of looking out for the place he was in search of, he soon found himself passing Essex house, then Arundel house—goodly mansions both; and then Somerset house (a right handsome pile), and the palace of the Savoy: and keeping along the garden walls attached to Worcester house, he got to Salisbury house—and a very delicate sight it was to notice these and other fine buildings on the banks of the Thames, with famous gardens and grounds (intersected by running streams) that went down to the water's edge; then keeping Covent Garden and the Strand Cross at his right, with the Maypole in the distance, he passed by the Ivy bridge, and presently stood before a truly noble structure, which the passengers and wayfarers he had questioned of his way told him was Durham house. In truth, it must needs be a notable fine building, having been an inn of the bishops of Durham, and latterly the residence of the once mighty John Dudley, earl of Northumberland.

On gaining admittance at the wicket, he was sharply questioned of several tall serving-men, clad in gay liveries, with silver badges on their left arms, who seemed loath to let one of his humble appearance have speech with their master.

"Ho, Roger! Timothy! Gabriel! Thomas! what now, I say!" called out old Stephen, as he slowly advanced toward the group, scanning them with a somewhat displeased aspect—"have ye so little respect for our master's house that ye loiter here gossiping together, while your duties stand unattended to? In with ye, idlers!"

"Here be a stranger, Stephen Shortcake, that seeketh our master," cried Roger.

"And he will have it Sir Walter bade him come," exclaimed Timothy.

"And he ventureth to say that he hath business with him," said Gabriel.

"Worse than all, he will not budge till he hath had speech of him," added Thomas.

"And who bade you be an hinderance to him?" asked Stephen sharply, after he had sufficiently scrutinized the modest demeanor of Master Francis. "Have I not told ye, many a time and oft, that when a stranger presented himself, seeking Sir Walter, and ye had doubts of his errand, ye were to call me? Away with ye, knaves, and attend to the wants of our master's guests."

Then, as soon as the serving-men had disappeared into the house, which they did in marvellous quick time, the old man courteously addressed Master Francis thus: "I pray you, good youth, be not vexed at the churlishness of those varlets: follow me, if it please you, and I will take care that you shall have opportunity to speak with Sir Walter; but that can not be at present, for he hath with him a power of noble commanders, sea-captains, men of war, and the like, talking upon pressing matters. If your business be not too urgent, doubtless it may tarry awhile and no loss happen."

"I would willingly wait Sir Walter Raleigh's leisure," replied the youth.

"Then come you with me and welcome," said Stephen. "But let me tell you, without meaning offence in it, that at the present there be no vacancy for a serving-man."

"I seek no such office," answered the youth, rather proudly; indeed, so little did his ambition relish the idea of being considered only worthy to be a serving-man, that he stopped of a sudden, and seemed inclined to turn back and give over all hope of advancement from that quarter.

"Nay, take it not ill of me, I pray you," exclaimed the old man, who saw, by the confusion in the youth's countenance, that which he had given utterance to had created some unpleasantness, "for all that you be not so bountifully garnished as many who come here on such a seeking, I could swear, at a glimpse, you are well worthy better hap. Come on, I entreat of you; and though I be but Stephen Shortcake, yet having served Sir Walter Raleigh a long service, and I trust, I may add a faithful, he hath of his excellent goodness thought proper to advance me to his confidence, and to the office of butler; I may without presumption say I have some influence with him; and if I could do aught for you, believe me I shall be well inclined to say a good word in your behalf."

"I am thankful for your kind offer," replied Master Francis; and then, with an effort to conquer the disagreeableness of his feelings, he advanced with his companion into the house. The old butler appeared to be vastly taken with the youth; but his quiet, pensive countenance and his tall and elegant figure, were enough to have made friends for him wherever he went.

"Come you with me, good sir," continued Stephen Shortcake, "I will see that your business be attended to at the first fitting time, and"—— Here he brake off his speech at once, for coming to the door of the house as Sir Walter Raleigh and some friends were leaving it, he hastened to open the gates, and Master Francis drew aside to let the company pass.

"I will see that everything is got ready with proper speed," said a very valiant-looking gentleman, as he walked along.

"Thanks, Sir John Burgh," replied Sir Walter, "I have set my all upon this cast, and so many brave spirits have embarked with me in the adventure, with large portions of their substance, that I am exceeding anxious nothing should be wanting to give us the end we look for."

"O' my life, Sir Walter, I long to have a hand in it," said another, of the like gallant nature.

"That wish I of all things, Sir Martin Frobisher," answered Raleigh, "for know I of an indisputable truth 'twould greatly be to our advantage could we count upon such profitable assistance." Then with many courtesies, which none knew better how to use, he saw them leave the gates.

"See I not he of whom mine esteemed friend Master Shakspeare spoke but yesterday?" inquired Sir Walter Raleigh, stopping before the youth and regarding him somewhat kindly, as well as with attention.

"If it please you, I am," replied Master Francis, now looking and feeling much abashed.

"Master Shakspeare hath given me good account of you," continued Sir Walter, "and I am well disposed in consequence thereof to do you what good office lieth in my ability. I am in want of a secretary. Think you you should like to venture yourself in that capacity?"

"I doubt much I am quite fit for it," answered the youth with a very sincere modesty.

"Of your sufficiency, from what hath been said in your behalf, I can have no question," said Raleigh, much pleased at the other's behavior, "therefore if it accord with your inclination, be sure of having liberal treatment. Are you content?"

"Indeed, I am delighted to such a measure"—

"Enough!" exclaimed Sir Walter, good-humoredly interrupting him, as he saw from his manner there was no doubt of his satisfaction; then turning to his butler, who stood respectfully at a little distance, added, "Stephen, see that Master Francis hath all things proper as my secretary."

"I will lose no time upon it, an't please you, Sir Walter," replied the old man cheerfully.

"I will myself instruct you in your duties," added his patron, "but at present you must go with Stephen, who will see you want for nothing." Having said this very encouragingly, he went into the house to join his guests.

"I congratulate you, sweet sir," exclaimed Stephen Shortcake, as soon as his master was gone. "Think not ill of me for fancying you driven to such ex

treme shifts as what I spoke of. I did it out of no unkindness to you, or slight upon your merit, believe me. When you know me well enough, I doubt not you shall give me credit for better intentions."

"Indeed, I am in too pleasant a mood to think of it," replied Master Francis, who was as rejoiced at this favorable turn in his fortunes as may be conceived of him. It was just that sort of employment he had most inclination for, and that seemed to give his ambitious hope the most ground to build upon.

"I pray you, good sir, follow me," said the old butler, "I must about my master's bidding—so while he is engaged with the noble lords and the men of war, I will see that you have proper entertainment." Then entering the house (talking a fair part of the time) he led Master Francis through divers spacious rooms, furnished very costly, and along sundry passages, wherein were many servingmen, dressed like those before spoken of (some of whom he reproved sharply for not seeming sufficiently attentive to their duties), till he entered a chamber of more humble appearance.

"I would fain find you more honorable lodging," observed Stephen, "but this being my room, and one in which you are not like to meet intruders, methought 'twould be best. I pray you put up with it for the nonce—feel as content in it as you may, and when all proper provision be made for your residence with us, then shall you be more becomingly accommodated."

Master Francis found no dissatisfaction in the chamber, which in truth was well stored with comforts, so that when Stephen Shortcake left him with a courteous excuse for his absence, he flung himself in a convenient chair, and did make comparisons with it and the room he had at his uncle's, in the which the former gained prodigiously, as may be supposed. He then gave himself up to his own reflections, which were gratifying to him in a very prodigal measure. He felt like a prisoner that hath cast off his gyves, and is a free man, after a long and terrible imprisonment; for he had got away from his miserly old kinsman, who had led him a pretty life of it—so far as his remembrance might go. Then his thoughts reverted to his adored Joanna, and he for some time found very exquisite satisfaction in imagining how pleased she would be to know of his success. Here I must leave him for awhile—for what may be thought more attractive matter.

It was about the afternoon of the same day that a gallant, well dressed, without affectation, of a free carriage and noble aspect—somewhat careless in his demeanor, yet evidently meaning no sort of offence—in fact, no other than Master Shakspeare himself—was seen walking up and down upon London bridge, now looking in at the shops, and sauntering about the houses there, with very much the look of one who is in waiting for another. He amused himself for some time with regarding the passengers, whether of foot or on horse, and speculating from their looks of what disposition they might be; but he seemed to tire of this at last—as who will not tire who is kept an unconscionable time waiting for one who delays coming? and after looking wistfully several times toward the city side of the bridge, as it seemed without avail, he was on the point of leaving the place with what philosophy he might, when all at once his look brightened up wonderfully, and with the pleasantest air possible, he made for a very pretty woman, well and daintily attired, who was approaching him. "Thanks, my sweet, for this coming!" exclaimed he gallantly, as he took his place by her side, and they walked together. "But in honest truth, I had like to have been out of patience."

"If you loved me but half as well as you have sworn you have," replied she, in an admirable soft voice, "you would have had patience enough to have tarried here till doomsday—and longer than that. But I was detained, gentle sir, or I would have been truer to mine appointment."

"I doubt it not," said Master Shakspeare; "and the delight I now enjoy in gazing on your perfections doth counterbalance whatever disquietude I found in your delay. Truly never hath true lover suffered as have I since that most endearing hour I chanced to meet you seeing the archery in Finsbury Fields. Methought the queen's company of liege bowmen showed marvellous skill—but it hath since been made known to me, that there was one nearer than they, whose archery beat them hollow."

"An excellent fine conceit, by my troth," exclaimed his fair companion, laughingly, "and cometh with marvellous good grace from one who out of all contradiction draweth 'the longbow' very prettily."

"O' my life I swear to you"—

"Nay, swear not, good sir," cried the

other, interrupting him; "for that be somewhat more than is required of you. Would you not take oath upon it that mine eyes outflash the diamond—my lips be ruddier than the cherry—and that my cheek putteth to shame the blushing of the rose?"

"Doubtless would I," replied he, looking upon her features,—which in truth were exceeding comely.

"And think you I can find interest in that I have heard so oft?" inquired she. "Other gallants have I met with, who were of such bountiful disposition that they would put all nature into disgrace for allowing me to leave her excellences so far behind. Was not that liberal of them? But methinks it would have sounded better from their lips had their object been as generous as their words. They would have had me believe myself a deity forsooth; but had I granted their prayers, what a poor idol of clay I should quickly have been thought."

Master Shakspeare said nothing; but he marvelled greatly at the tone and manner of the speaker, the which, differing from his experience, made him the more inclined to a nearer intimacy. "Count me not as one of those, I pray you," he exclaimed at last. "I look upon you as a truly admirable woman—one withal no woman's son could look on without admiring, and could not admire without loving desperately. Then as for comparisons between your excellences and those of nature, I do assert, and hope to live and die in that opinion, that of all fair things that give beauty to this flowery earth, the loveliness of woman exceedeth them infinitely. Place side by side with those thrilling orbs the brightest stone that ever glistened in the sunbeam, and while the spectator admireth the latter only for its brilliance, he must find quickly he can not gaze upon the warmer and more glorious radiance of your eyes, without feeling the flood of life rushing through his veins like a mighty river breaking from its banks. The one hath no expression—the other hath a thousand. And let him who preferreth fruits and flowers, note the honey-sweet smile that playeth round those tempting lips, or press the eloquent softness of those blushing cheeks; and I will wager my life on it, he will presently leave the poor unloving things he hath so much admired, for the rich beauty of such delicate flesh and blood as it is now my happiness to behold."

"I'faith these are brave words," replied his fair companion; "but I doubt not you would say as much to any other that taketh your fancy for the while."

"You much abuse me by that opinion," said Master Shakspeare.

"Yet will I acknowledge to you," added she, "that you have in some way pleased me. Your language and bearing differ from all I have had acquaintance with save one; and I live in hopes that you are of a better sort. 'Tis strange that you have never told me your name."

"Not more so can it be than that you have refrained from telling me yours," observed he.

"Mine is Joanna," added the other.

"Joanna!" exclaimed Master Shakspeare, as if he had heard the name before, for in truth he had, but had forgot the occasion of it; "and what else?"

"No matter—that is enough to call me by," replied she. "And now, if it please you, yours?"

"Mine is William."

"William what?" inquired Joanna.

"No matter—that is enough to call me by," replied Master Shakspeare with a smile.

"You will not say?" she asked, as if she was curious to know. "Then must I take my leave of you, for I am in haste to return home."

"Let me at least see you to the street in which you dwell," said he, as he was standing with her at the end of the bridge. "I should hold myself but a sorry gallant to leave so fair a creature to find her way home unattended."

"Oh, if your name is such that it may not be told, the sooner we part company the better for me," observed Joanna, smiling in her turn.

"Nay, it is not so bad as that, believe me," answered the other. "In truth, I may say, it is a name in some repute. But it may just as well be told walking as standing." And at that she hesitated not to proceed onward. "Doth it not strike you," he continued, "that what is fair in one case is honest in another; for as you have given me but your Christian name, have I given you but mine: and yet are you not content."

"Were you as well disposed toward me as you have asserted," observed his fair companion, who, as is usual, grew more inquisitive the longer her curiosity remained ungratified, "you would have made no question about the matter. I' faith it says but little for your regard. Methinks you must either have an ill name, or hold me of so little account, that

you think me undeserving of knowing you."

"Neither, o' my life!" exclaimed Master Shakspeare. "Never met I a pretty woman I so much desired to be well known unto—and as for my name, I do assure you it standeth well in the public estimation."

"By my troth, 'tis hard to credit," replied Joanna, though the more intent from what he said, of getting the knowledge she required. Just at that moment the Lord Southampton, the Lord Pembroke, and other noble gallants, to whom he was well known, came riding by very finely apparelled, and pulled off their hats to him. "Know you those princely-looking gentlemen?" she inquired.

"It is mine excellent good friend the Lord Southampton and certain of his acquaintance," replied he: at which she became all the more curious, and as they arrived at the corner of Eastcheap, she said, "Here is the street in which I live, where I must leave you: but your name hath not yet been told to me."

"Nay, let me behold the dwelling in which lives so inestimable a creature," asked the other very pressingly. "And as for my name—it may be told in one street as well as in another," and they continued to walk together.

"What a place for traffic is this!" exclaimed Master Shakspeare, "and how busy do the citizens seem in the different shops and warehouses! Methinks I can hear the chink of the money; or at least the ready laugh of the chapman at his customer's jest. These be they, fair Joanna! who are up early and late, laboring to the utmost every day of their lives that others may have the advantage of it—whose greatest pleasure consisteth in the counting their gains, and greatest consolation is the knowing that they are worth something more than their neighbors. These be they who are acquainted with no virtue unless it be in the possession of wealth; and believe there can not be any vice so abominable as poverty. In their idea, aldermen are on a footing with angels; and to be in the city compter is to be damned to all eternity. They will wink at one who defrauds the orphan and robs the widow of her right, if he hath done it to some tune; but at the necessitous wretch, who is driven to do any small villany, they shout, 'Oh, the horrid rogue!' and would have him hanged forthwith. A man who hath his thousands might turn his wife and children into the street, and live as sensually as he pleased, and they would never wag a tongue at him; but if another, who liveth honestly with what little he gains, be but suspected of kissing a pretty wench on the sly, they would raise such a hubbub about his ears, and seem so shocked at his iniquity, that the poor fellow should be right glad to escape out of the city with a whole skin. These be they—but why stop you here?" he inquired suddenly, finding that his companion proceeded no further.

"This is the house in which I live," replied she, who had not been inattentive to what had passed. "But shame upon you for keeping me unanswered! you have not told me your name yet."

"O' my life I am exceeding tired, fair Joanna," said Master Shakspeare. "It would be but a charity to ask me in—and as for my name—why it may as well be told sitting as walking."

It is scarcely necessary to add that Master Shakspeare was ushered up stairs into the best room; in the which he quickly made himself at home, as may be believed. Indeed, Joanna found his conversation so agreeable, that for a time she quite forgot to ask his name of him; but in truth he gave her not the opportunity, for as soon as one subject seemed about to be exhausted, he launched out with another; and displayed such abundance of wit, genius, and knowledge of the world, that she appeared quite in a maze with wonder and admiration.

"Since you talk so well upon poetry," said she, when she found opportunity for speech, "I have some lines here of which I should like mightily to have your judgment." Then from a drawer she took a paper, which she brought toward him; and added, "they were writ by a worthy gentleman, who doth fancy, much after your own fashion, that he is in love with me, and pays me such fine compliments, as you will therein peruse. Perhaps you also write verses?"

"A little," replied Master Shakspeare with a smile; and, believing that he had a rival in the field, he opened the paper. His astonishment may in some degree be conceived when it is known that he began to read the very poem he had given to Master Burbage. He saw in an instant how the affair stood, and was in no small degree amused thereat.

"What think you of them?" inquired Joanna.

"O' my life, I think of them very indifferently," answered he.

"Indeed!" she exclaimed with some

surprise, "I marvel at that—for they seem to me admirably ingenious. By my troth, between ourselves, I have my doubts that they were writ by him who brought them me; for he seemeth such a mad, hare-brained, wild, wilful gallant. I have given him but monstrous little encouragement, yet doth he go on at such a rate, one would think he was in so poor a case for the love of me, that he would be a knocking at death's door unless I smiled upon him."

"Oh, the exaggerating varlet!" cried the other, laughing exceedingly as he compared in his own mind Master Burbage's statement with what he had just heard.

"And when I told him I doubted his authorship," continued his fair companion, "he swore by Apollo and all the Nine that he wrote every line on't; and that it was the worst stuff he ever did."

"He said that, did he!" exclaimed Master Shakspeare.

"Ay, that he did," added Joanna; "and moreover, vowed to me most solemnly that he was considered such an exquisite fine hand at the making of verses, that his friend Will Shakspeare, among many others, was oft obliged to borrow a line of him when he came to a halt in his measure."

"Oh! Dick, Dick, Dick," cried he, in a more subdued voice.

"And when I asked of him his opinion of Master Shakspeare and his plays," continued the other, "he answered slightingly,—'Why, a—to be sure, he was very well; but no one knows how much he hath been beholden to me for all his best verses.'"

"If he deserved not cudgeling for this, then am I no judge of merit," exclaimed Master Shakspeare; "but of course you know him, fair Joanna?"

"He hath told me that he was one of the queen's players," replied she; "but else I know of him as little as I do of you. Tell me, I pray you, of what name you are, for in truth I am near tired of asking."

"Hush!" cried he, "there cometh some one to the door;" for a knocking was heard at that moment.

"'Tis he," replied the mercer's daughter, "and till now I had forgot he promised to pay me a visit."

"Hist! hist! Joanna," cried a voice from the other side of the door, "'tis I, Richard the Third."

"'Tis Dick sure enough," thought Master Shakspeare: then whispering to his fair companion,—"Leave him to me, I pray you," he advanced softly to the door.

"Hist! hist! adorable Joanna," exclaimed Master Burbage, through the keyhole, "'tis I, Richard the Third."

"Go, get thee hence, thou crook-backed tyrant," replied Master Shakspeare aloud; "knowest thou not that William the Conqueror reigned before Richard the Third."

"What, Will!" cried the other in the utmost astonishment; "what ill wind brought thee here? Oh! thou abhorred traitor, thou hast betrayed me."

"Nay, thou errest in that, Master Dick," responded his old associate, "for knew I not till this moment that the truly adorable Joanna was known to thee. But if I had taken advantage of thy confidence, it would have been but proper return for the most atrocious things thou hast said of me to this exquisite creature. So get thee gone, and quickly; for in truth thou hast interrupted the infinite gratification I have been receiving."

"Oh! most sweet Joanna," cried Master Burbage, in a marvellous moving voice,—"my heart's treasure!—my soul's idol!—my angel upon earth!—my everything!—I do implore you, through the keyhole (because the door is fast, and I can not get in), by that fathomless ocean of love I bear for your inconceivable excellences, get rid of that villain straight, for it be utter destruction to be seen in his pestilent company."

"Who is he?" asked she, laughingly; although she began to have some suspicion of who he was.

"The very notoriousest villain that walks, adorable Joanna," replied he, outside; "he hath done such mischief among women as you would find it horrible to think on. Item, five-and-twenty maids utterly undone—fifty widows sent stark mad—and a hundred and odd wives made miserable for life. I do assure you, sweet Joanna, that through him there hath lately been such abundance of crowner's quests, that the like hath not been known since the memory of man. Indeed, it be beyond dispute, that half a dozen stout fellows are kept in constant employ fishing distracted damsels out of the conduit, such a traitor is he to your dear sex. And as for hanging, the citizens scarce dare leave a nail sticking in their wainscots, so many of their wives and daughters have of late been found suspended to them, with these melancholy words pinned upon their kirtles,—'Oh! cruel—cruel Shakspeare.'"

"Are you such a wretch as this, Master Shakspeare?" inquired Joanna, as seriously as she could.

"No, on my life," replied he, laughing very heartily.

"Believe him not, dear Joanna," exclaimed Master Burbage, "he hath a tongue that would undo the Gordian knot; therefore your undoing would be but an easy matter with such a thorough villain. Oh! incomparably sweet Joanna! here on my bended knees, outside the door (for lack of being in), I conjure you injure not your delicate reputation by talking to such a fellow. Listen not to what he hath to say, for truth and he are in no sort of acquaintance: he will swear you black's white, such a horrid reprobate is he; and then, on the instant, turn round and take oath it be crimson. I have preached to him by the hour, in hopes of getting him to repent of his villanies; but, I say it with tears in my eyes, adorable Joanna, he is incorrigible; and as clean past all good counsel as a chicken with the pip."

"Prythee go on, Dick," cried Master Shakspeare, very merrily—his fair companion evidently being in much the same mood; "I admire thy invention hugely."

"Out, traitor!" exclaimed the other.

"If I had not heard this, I should have doubted thou wert clever enough to say the witty things thou hast."

"Away, villain!"

"But since I have known thou art such an exquisite fine hand at making verses," continued Master Shakspeare, "that I, of many others, am oft obliged to borrow a line of thee when I happen to come to a halt in my measure; and remember how much I am beholden to thee for all my best scenes, I marvel not at all at thy present cleverness, and do promise to have a better opinion of thee than I have done."

"A fico for thy opinion," replied Master Burbage; "all stratagems are fair in love and war; and when I gave her thy verses"—

"What, wrote you not the poem?" quickly inquired Joanna, interrupting him; "did you not swear to me by Apollo and all the Nine, that you wrote every line on't, and that it was the worst stuff you ever did?"

"What a goose art thou for not keeping thine own counsel," said his friend; "for though thou hast used me very scurvily, I would not have betrayed thee for it."

"Let me in, I pray you, most exquisite Joanna," exclaimed he through the keyhole, "and I will say such things to you that you shall be satisfied of my behavior."

"Nay, if you can put on me Master Shakspeare's lines as your own," said Joanna, "I doubt hugely you can be more sincere in other matters."

"Pardon me this one small fault," replied he, very movingly, "which I have been led into from exceeding love of your ravishing perfections, and send away that fellow, who, by this hand, is the errantest deceiver that lives; and let me see you more commodiously than through the chinks of the door, which in truth afford me but a mere glimpse of your infinite beauties; and if I do not love you for it, in such a sort as will make amends for my transgression, then banish me for ever."

"Dost take me for thy friend, Dick?" inquired Master Shakspeare, leaning against the door.

"Open the door, and get thee gone, and then thou shalt be held a friend indeed," replied Master Burbage.

"Well—my bowels yearn toward thee exceedingly," continued the other.

"Ah! do they so? Thou wert ever a true friend," said he on the outside: "do open the door—there's a sweet Will."

"But am I the very notoriousest villain that walks, Dick?"

"By this light thou art a very angel! Excellent Will, open the door."

"And have I really undone so many women as thou hast said?"

"Nay, on my life, thou hast so good a heart, thou wouldst not undo a mouse. Open the door, sweet Will, I prythee."

"Well, Dick"—

"What sayest, old friend?"

"For thy consolation in this extremity"—

"Ah!"

"Dost listen, Dick?"

"With all my ears, excellent Will."

"I do assure thee—*she is—a most—delicious creature.*"

"Out on thee, thou aggravating—tantalizing—abominable caitiff!" cried Master Burbage, impatiently; for Master Shakspeare had said the preceding sentence so slowly, and with so much emphasis on the last words; and the sentence was so different from what he had expected, that he seemed terribly put out at it. "I do forswear thy acquaintance from this. Nay, I will not remain another moment in thy villanous neighborhood;" and whilst Master Shakspeare

and the beautiful Joanna were laughing heartily, Master Burbage made all haste to get out of the house.

CHAPTER X.

I am as I am, and so will I be;
But how that I am none knoweth truly:
Be it ill, be it well, be I bond, be I free,
I am as I am, and so will I be.
SIR THOMAS WYATT.

Fraud showed in comely clothes a lovely look,
An humble cast of eye, a sober face;
And so sweet speech, a man might her have took
For him that said, "Hail, Mary, full of grace!"
But all the rest deformedly did look;
As full of filthiness and foul disgrace;
Hid under long, large garments that she wore,
Under the which a poisoned knife she bore.
SIR JOHN HARRINGTON.

SIR WALTER RALEIGH did find exceeding difficulty in the setting out upon his expedition, for Queen Elizabeth, in no way prodigal of her means where there might be doubt of advantage to her, readily enough listened to the misgivings of Lord Burghley, who was famous for keeping a tight hold upon the treasury; and the six goodly ships she had promised, dwindled to two. She delayed his starting from time to time, upon some insufficient pretext; and even seemed inclined, from things that his enemies gave out to his disadvantage, the instant he had left the court, to take from him the command and give it to another; but such a proceeding his associates in the adventure would not hear of, as she knew. At last he sailed with a fleet of fifteen sail, whereof two—the Garland and the Foresight—under the command of Sir John Burgh, were those of her majesty's providing; and the rest, with the provision of all things necessary, had been furnished by himself, Sir John Hawkins, and others his good friends—the captain, soldiers, and sailors therein, being men of notable resolution, and of sufficient experience in such matters; but contrary winds obliging him to put back, and these continuing to blow for a long time, he was forced to keep harbor till he could proceed with better hope of success.

In the meantime, there were not wanting those who made the opposition of the elements assume the appearance of culpable neglect in Sir Walter Raleigh, in consequence of which he had barely put to sea again when he was overtaken by Sir Martin Frobisher in a pinnace of my lord admiral's, called the Disdain, bringing her majesty's letters of recall, with a command to leave his charge in the hands of her officers. This, it may well be believed, he liked not to do—seeing that he had been in so much trouble and expense (amounting to a third of the whole cost) for the originating and fitting out of the expedition, and was in a manner constrained not to abandon the interests of his fellow-adventurers, who had put all their trust in his valor and skilfulness; so, fancying he could well excuse himself on his return, he would in no case relinquish his command: but held on his course. Speaking with a vessel from the Azores, he learned that Philip of Spain, getting notice of his expedition, had sent express orders to all the ports of the West India islands, and in Terra Firma, to lay no treasure abroad that year: therefore there could be small hope of getting the Plate fleet: but he turned not back till he met with a dreadful storm athwart Cape Finisterre that sunk some of his boats and pinnaces. Then giving such orders as he thought necessary for their future conduct, he put about ship; still in hope, but exceeding vexed.

It may well be believed that his beautiful young wife liked not his venturing himself on a voyage at that time, and parted not with him without infinite regret, and some fears of the issue; for Dame Elizabeth was in continual dread that the marriage would be discovered of the queen, whose temper she had much experience of; and doubted not that when she came to know of it, she would be wrath, beyond all hope of forgiveness, against her husband. Therefore went she in constant alarm. Never loved woman more devotedly than she loved Sir Walter Raleigh; and as she could scarcely be brought to allow him to peril his fortunes for her safety—so entire and unselfish was her regard for him—she could do nothing but blame her own affectionateness for having brought him into such a strait. Her chiefest care was to deny her own marriage, which, she knew not how, had got bruited about; and she made Sir Walter promise, not only to deny it, were he questioned, but by those attentions she knew the queen most liked, to put all thought of it out of her majesty's head. Her father and the merry Alice sought all occasion to second her endeavors, seeing that it was of so much moment to her peace of mind; but all their cares, and all her cousin's pleasant talk, removed not from her the conviction that she had been the ruin of him whose

happiness she would have died to secure.

As for Master Francis—never youth went on so prosperously. Sir Walter seeing that he was apt and well disposed, every day took a greater liking to him. He would have him taught under his own eye all gentlemanly accomplishments, in the which he made such rapid progress as delighted him amazingly; and would frequently discourse to him of such matters as he thought the most likely to be of service hereafter. Such a change took place in the scrivener's nephew, that he looked in no way the same person. He dressed in style, with a goodly feather in his hat, and a handsome rapier at his side; and having mingled continually with gallant knights and gentlemen, some of his shyness began to wear off. In truth, he was as handsome a youth as any of them, though still exceeding fair and delicate; the only sign of man in his appearance being a slight mustache on his upper lip—the which, had Gib the callboy seen, might somewhat have shaken his conviction of Master Francis's fitness to "do the women."

The duties of Sir Walter Raleigh's secretary consisted in most part of writing letters, keeping a journal of the voyage, and putting down, at his patron's dictation, remarks on such subjects as he was disposed to treat of. Of this employment the young secretary never tired, it was so agreeable to his humor; and so well did he quit himself, that he soon gained Sir Walter's entire confidence. That he thought much of his miserly uncle is not to be expected, but the mercer's daughter was a frequent subject of his reflections; and his last interview with her oft gave to his memory exceeding satisfaction. He had written to her since several times, and had received from her a few letters—the which, though they were in some degree kind, he liked not, for they appeared unto him scarce kind enough; but though this gave him no little uneasiness, he doubted not when he returned, to find her everything he wished. Nothing could exceed the respect and admiration he felt for Sir Walter Raleigh, for he was of that disposition to be most sensible of Sir Walter's friendliness toward him; and his own intelligence which, for his years, was great indeed, enabled him the more correctly to appreciate the other's singular fine genius in all things.

One evening, as they were homeward bound, they were together in Sir Walter's cabin, which was pleasantly fitted up with all manner of charts, some few books on choice subjects, and divers instruments necessary for the voyage. Master Francis sat writing at a table that was made fast to the flooring, and which was lighted by a lamp that swung from above; and his patron walked up and down the room with folded arms and grave aspect, occasionally stopping to dictate something to his secretary which the latter presently put to paper. This had continued for some two hours or more, when Sir Walter stopped in his walk, and the other thinking that he was about to say something of moment, leaning his left arm on the table and holding his pen in readiness, in an attitude of profound attention did look up into his patron's face; but Sir Walter, at that time, thought of no other thing than the pale and pensive countenance of the youth before him, for the light from the lamp falling on it as he sat in that position, gave to him an appearance so delicate that it clean put all other subjects out of his head.

"So you know not your parentage?" said he at last in a very friendly tone of voice. Master Francis was taken by surprise as it were at this, as he looked for other sort of speech from him; and his features presently were clouded with a sudden melancholy.

"Aught more than I have told you, honorable sir, know I not," he replied.

"'Tis a strange history," observed the other.

"In truth it is," said the secretary very dejectedly.

"I have taxed my memory more than once," continued Sir Walter, "to see if among all mine acquaintances there was one whose name would answer to the initials you have on the miniature, but with small profit. Certain it is, that when I was seeking to advance the protestant cause on the plains of Flanders under that experienced soldier, Sir John Norris, in my company there was one Holdfast, whose Christian name, methinks, was Francis."

"Ha!" exclaimed the youth, earnestly. "Perchance it was my father."

"I doubt it, Master Francis," said Sir Walter, kindly to him. "He was but an indifferent fellow—a mere adventurer, and a sorry character, by all accounts. It was said of him he had left England to avoid a marriage with some person of poor origin, whom he had undone, and whose relations were like to make a stir upon the business."

"'Tis he!" cried his secretary, in very

woful fashion; for his heart was cast down, and his aspiring thoughts utterly discomfited.

"Nay, I doubt it hugely," replied his patron. "This Holdfast was of so contrary a disposition to yourself. He was given to many dishonorable practices—a hanger-on of prodigal youth, whom he fleeced at play; and a doer of any mean thing by which he might get present profit. I held him in exceeding dislike, and was well pleased, upon proof being shown that he had cheated a companion at the dice, that we got rid of him."

"Know you what became of him?" inquired the youth, anxiously.

"I did hear he had turned puritan," answered Raleigh, "yet I can not say whether upon sufficient authority."

Master Francis was now in most comfortless case, for he did remember that his uncle, in his passions, oft had called him "base-born," and the like; which made him apt to believe that he was the fruit of some low intrigue; whereof the thought, to one of his sensitive nature, was scarce to be endured. Seeing that his intelligence had been taken in such sorrowful part, Sir Walter did presently go up to the youth, and laying his hand, in a friendly manner, on the other's shoulder, said kindly to him:—

"Be of better heart, Master Francis. If matters turn out so untoward as that your birth should be of such indifferent sort, mind it not, I pray you. Of your fortunes I will take good heed. But there exists no proof you are of such descent; and the evidence is not circumstantial enough for me to place much reliance on it."

"I think it be but too true, honorable sir," replied his secretary. "For mine uncle"——

"What of your uncle, Master Francis?" inquired his patron, seeing that the other hesitated to say more.

"In his anger, hath often called me by such vile terms as"——

"Fear nothing," said Sir Walter, encouragingly, "'tis a friend who listens."

"Indeed I can not say it," exclaimed the youth, shaking his head, and looking as if it was too repugnant to his feelings to be named.

"Well, well, as you list," answered Raleigh, raising himself up; for he had been leaning over him, and seemed to understand and appreciate his feelings; "but whatever it be, regard it not; for a bad man—which, from what you have said, I take your kinsman to be, will say anything in his passion. It is a certain truth that, in these times, good birth is ever your best recommendation; but let not this affect you, even if it be your mishap to want it; which, till I have better warrant for it, will I never believe. It sounds fine, doubtless, to claim kin with a long line of honorable ancestry; but men that have no other merit than this be like unto a growing crop of our new vegetable, the potato—all that is good of them be underground. How much better is it to be yourself the getter of your own greatness. If you continue to show that commendable nature I have perceived in you, you shall not lack opportunity for honorable advancement, let your birth be what it may: therefore I would have you think no more of it, but the rather apply yourself to get perfect in such qualifications, as seem the most likely to stand you in good service at a fitting time." Saying which, Sir Walter Raleigh made for the door; and left the cabin.

But Master Francis did think more of it: and the more he thought, the more he seemed inclined to think. His ambition had had a shock, from the which he was not like to recover speedily; for a notion had got fixed in him, that of all things, ill birth was the most disgraceful (seeing the odium in which it was generally held); and he could not endure it should be said of him, that he was the misbegotten child of a paltry cheater. His pride was humbled mightily; yet did it rise up against such dishonor the more it was cast down at it. It seemed as if he would not be held in such poor esteem of the world, however degraded he felt in his own opinion. He tried to think Holdfast and he could be of no sort of relationship; yet, in spite of himself a conviction was forced upon him that the contrary was the truth; and the fear he had now was, that it should be talked of.

In the meantime, the enemies of Sir Walter Raleigh slackened not in their endeavors to ruin him with the queen. It may appear to some passing strange that one who, besides being of most notable excellence, sought to do no man ill, should have enemies: but it was in consequence of his towering so much above them in all commendable things, that he was misliked of so many. And as they who longed to ruffle it at court above all others, thought they had no chance of it while he was in favor, to whom they stood in such poor comparison, they strove all they could to bring him down, that

they might advance themselves upon his ruin. First of these was Sir Robert Cecil, whose ambitious aims would stop at no impediments that craft could overcome; and he was so skilful in his cunning as to be suspected of none; for he seemed to make all around him his tools, to do what he would; and keeping in obscurity himself, escaped free from all suspicion. His talents were above the ordinary; but he was ambitious of holding the greatest power in his own hands, and liked not that any should be mightier than he. Next to him was Lord Henry Howard, his associate and sworn coadjutor, one of a good family, being brother of the Duke of Norfolk; but having been a great spendthrift and profligate, to the ruin of his fortune, made him glad to assist Cecil in his plots and devices to oust Sir Walter Raleigh from his vantage—which he did with exceeding craftiness. In the Lady Howard of Walden they found a fitting helpmate. She was a woman of some beauty, but of no principle; and as she believed that Sir Walter had slighted her, she was impatient to be revenged of him. Her close attendance on the queen gave her what opportunity she wanted, and she was only kept back from using it by the counsel of Sir Robert Cecil, who liked not to have it done till matters were more ripe.

To these were added all the envious, the ambitious, and the vain, who hung about the court, and were ever intriguing to raise themselves upon the disadvantage of another; and these had already made themselves busy with calling in question Raleigh's conduct with the fleet—and not without the effect they desired. It was at this time that whispers were set afoot concerning Sir Walter's marriage, and many malicious things were said of the cause of it; but none, as yet, had hinted it to the queen. It was now thought time to bring matters to a push, for her majesty was in some sort displeased with Sir Walter that he had delayed so long with his expedition, and had done nothing, as was yet known of him. Therefore the Lady Howard took occasion, when she was in private with her majesty, to acquaint her with all that she knew between Elizabeth Throckmorton and Sir Walter Raleigh, taking care to aggravate the matter as much as was possible.

Nothing could exceed the indignation of the queen. She was now pale with anger, and in a moment red with shame. Every wrinkle in her face was made conspicuous, she was in such a towering passion; and she strode up and down the chamber with haughty steps, now uttering denunciations against her maid of honor, and now denouncing terrible punishment upon her captain of the guard. Her attendant stood by, her dark eyes flashing with pleasure at the storm she had raised, endeavoring, by all manner of spiteful insinuations, to increase her majesty's fury against the offenders.

"Nay, by God's wounds, 'tis too bad," exclaimed the queen; "they shall rue it. Their guilty doings shall have fitting punishment, else are we not queen of England. And for her, no disgrace can be sufficient for so deep an offence—a wanton—a hussy—a creature vile and infamous! Had she no shame? Had she no sense of her wickedness, to commit her villanies so near us, and turn our palace into a ——O! it is monstrous!"

"In truth, I wonder she could ever look her virtuous sovereign in the face," said her ladyship.

"Such unblushing impudency never disgraced a Christian court," cried her majesty; "it exceedeth aught of which we have ever heard; 'tis most atrocious, horrible, and abominable! What will it be thought of us, if those so near our person take to such vile courses? Why, it may give a handle to the malignant to say we are as evil disposed ourselves. Every hair stands on end at the thought of it."

"I am horror-struck," observed my Lady Howard, looking more completely shocked than her royal mistress.

"Such shameless iniquity deserves to be whipped through the world," continued the queen; "out upon it! fie upon the age that doth produce such vile women! Nay, and forsooth, if things go on at this rate, there will be neither safety nor honor for us poor virgins."

"Indeed, I think not, please your majesty," responded her attendant, who, by-the-by, bore no very reputable character; "and am I the more indignant, when I think what a glorious example she hath had before her in your majesty, whose exceeding virtuousness should, methinks, have taught her better behavior."

"Her extreme vileness was such that it was beyond all teaching," replied her majesty, sharply; "she was a worthless baggage from the first, who could profit by no example. We are amazed she should ever have ventured herself in our presence: but by all the angels in heaven, she shall suffer for it. As for

him, whom we have raised from nothing, we will let him know, and quickly, that she who makes can mar. The ungrateful caitiff, to carry on his paltry doings with such a Jezebel, in total disregard of his duty to us."

"And so near your royal presence too," cried my Lady Howard.

"Oh! 'tis most intolerable," exclaimed the queen, in a fresh burst of rage; "'tis the horridest—loathsomest piece of villany that ever disgraced a royal palace. What devilish malignity led him into it 'tis not possible to say; but he hath done us foul dishonor in the face of all Europe; and, by God's wounds, he shall smart for it. The ambassadors will talk of it—it will be a jest for Philip of Spain,—that arch idolater the pope will have it preached from the pulpit; and all the wretched papists abroad and at home will find matter in it for further calumnies of us. Art sure he hath married the wretch?"

"I have heard, please your majesty," replied her ladyship, "that Sir Robert Cecil and my Lord Henry Howard, having got into a pair of oars but a brief space after this abandoned creature took water, saw her land at Durham house, where it is supposed of many, Sir Walter's chaplain, Dr. Robert Burrel, did make them man and wife."

"Worse and worse!" cried the queen, renewing her lofty strides along the chamber, while her eyes were flashing with anger, and her bosom heaved mightily—her wrath so moved her. "He hath not only done us notorious infamy, but, without our permission first asked and granted, he hath dared marry. What! he thinks, forsooth, because we have shown him some small favor,—having better opinion of him than he deserved, he shall be allowed to ruffle it as he please. Now, by this blessed light, we'll teach him somewhat differently. As for that Burrel, he must be made to know that to thrust his fool's head into such a pestilent meddling, is not doing God's work, but the devil's. He deserveth to have his gown stripped off his back, and whipped at the cart's tail by the common hangman. Such meddlesome priests are ready for any villany. We marvel greatly that Sir Robert Cecil informed us not of what he had observed of this, as in duty bound he should. But 'tis thus we are served: the shamefulest things are done against us from day to day, yet those we have promoted to do us service, instead of giving us instant knowledge thereof, keep as close upon the business as if they had been bribed into complacency."

"There is a knocking at the door, please your majesty," said my Lady Howard.

"See to it," replied the queen.

"'Tis my Lord Burghley," added her attendant, after she had gone to the door to notice whom it might be.

"Let him have entrance," cried her majesty. Presently the lord treasurer advanced slowly into the chamber, with his hat in his hand, making proper obedience; and saw in a moment by the queen's countenance—which, in spite of all her cosmetics, looked exceeding black and sour—that something was out of place.

"Be seated, my lord," said the queen, for this indulgence she granted because of the infirmities of his age. The lord treasurer seated himself with becoming gravity, marvelling much what made her majesty look in such sort, and pace the chamber so haughtily; and he turned toward my Lady Howard to see if he could read in her looks any interpretation of the mystery, but, to the prodigious increase of his astonishment, she looked the blacker of the two.

"My lord treasurer!" exclaimed the queen, scarcely able to speak, she seemed in so great a passion, and stopping suddenly before him, "that Raleigh hath become the blackest traitor that ever was known."

"Humph!" cried my Lord Burghley, in some sort of surprise, and drawing in his lips with an appearance of the very profoundest gravity.

"He hath done us gross offence," continued the queen. "He hath committed such foul wrong against our royal dignity, that the sacrifice of his life will not be enough amends."

"Ha!" exclaimed the lord treasurer, dropping his jaw as if with a sudden astonishment.

"He hath had the audacity—think of the fellow's vileness, my lord—to be shamefully familiar with that horridest of wantons Elizabeth Throckmorton!" and then her majesty continued her haughty pacing of the chamber.

"And in the palace too, my lord," added her attendant, with a look of exceeding indignation.

"Ho!" ejaculated the other, poking out his chin the while, as if in wonder at the enormity of the offence.

"She shall meet with her reward,

continued the queen very angrily. "It shall never be said that we left such hussies to the indulgence of their own wicked wills."

"And so near the royal presence!" added my Lady Howard, with sufficient emphasis.

"Humph!" cried my Lord Burghley, seeming very much shocked.

"But more than this—my lord! more than this," said the queen, stopping before her lord treasurer with a look of extreme anger, and raising her voice to the highest pitch, "he hath dared to marry her."

"Ha!" exclaimed he, in a manner as if horror-struck.

"He hath held us in contempt—he hath put a slight upon our authority," saying which the queen bounced off as before.

"After her majesty hath been so bountiful a mistress to him," added her ladyship, "I am quite shocked at such devilish ingratitude."

"Ho!" said my lord, looking monstrously shocked also.

"Where is Sir Robert Cecil?" inquired the queen, "we must have speech with him instantly. It will go hard with him if he do not explain satisfactorily how he hath so much fallen short in his duty. We will have none such about us. We will favor no neglecters. We will not be served by such as can be dumb when treason stalks abroad. Send him to us, my lord, without fail. He hath been privy to these villanous goings-on, and hath taken care to give us no hint of the matter."

"Humph!" cried my Lord Burghley very seriously, as he rose from the chair; then proceeded out of the chamber in search of his son, as his royal mistress had commanded him.

Her majesty continued in the same humor to stride backward and forward, letting out her anger without stint, now against the one and now against the other, but most prodigally against her fair namesake, for whom no punishment seemed with her to be ample enough; while the Lady Howard took care that her rage should not go out for lack of proper stirring. Sir Robert Cecil evidently had not been far off, for he knocked at the door in a little space after the Lord Burghley had left it.

"So, Sir Robert Cecil!" exclaimed the queen angrily, as soon as he made his appearance before her, "you must needs become an aider and abettor of treason."

"I aid treason—I abet treason!" cried he in seeming consternation, as he humbly knelt before his sovereign. "What ill hap is mine to have such accusation brought against me by so good a mistress? I will be sworn on my life I never spoke or did aught against your majesty. Far from it, I find most exquisite delight in endeavoring to prove myself your majesty's faithfullest servant; and I would not change your service for that of any sovereign upon earth, were I tempted to it ever so. Indeed, please your majesty, if you take from me the reputation I have at all times diligently sought, of giving place to no man in honesty and obedience, I would not wish to live another hour: for without character I should be unworthy to breathe in the presence of one so exalted in excellence, and deprived of the pleasure all persons enjoy who are held in such honor as to be selected to do your majesty's bidding, life hath nothing left that can be esteemed after it. Let me humbly ask of what treason I am accused?"

"The knowing of Raleigh's traitorous proceedings with that disgrace of our court, Elizabeth Throckmorton," replied the queen with exceeding bitterness, "whereof you told us nothing. What they have done is as black treason as ever was thought of—secresy was all they required to succeed in their infamous designs, and by not declaring to us what you were privy to, that we might have it hindered, you allowed them to go on to the perfection of their iniquitous doings, and so became an aider and abettor of their treason."

"Please your majesty," said Cecil very earnestly, "two reasons had I, and good ones they seemed to me, that I should not make a stir in this business. In the first place my knowledge amounted to little more than the common suspicion, of the which there was no certain proof—in the next place, I like not being a tale-bearer in the best of times—but I do stand in such respectful awe of your majesty's superhuman virtue, that I could not for the life of me break any matter to your majesty's modest ear that appeared tainted with indelicate meaning."

"We do approve of your reasons, Sir Robert," replied the queen, "so far as to clear you of all offence in this. But now we charge you on your allegiance speak without extenuation whatever hath come to your knowledge."

"Since your majesty hath graciously given me leave, I will," answered he. "I must premise that of their intercourse

knew I nothing save what was the general gossip; but knowing how much the world is given to scandal, I took no heed of what I heard, believing, as I do, that Sir Walter Raleigh is too noble and discreet a gentleman to take to such dishonorable courses."

"My Lady Howard hath given us good proof of it, which she had from their own lips," observed the queen impatiently.

"Indeed, Sir Robert, I did by accident overhear all their infamous secrets, the which I thought it but proper in me to carry to her majesty," said her attendant.

"I'm all amazed!" cried Robert Cecil, looking in as absolute an astonishment as was ever beheld. "I marvel at it infinitely! who could have thought it? How impossible it doth seem that one so superlatively wise and learned as is your majesty's captain of the guard, should have committed himself so abominably! Indeed, it maketh me afraid of mine own honesty. I shall tremble for myself, knowing as I do that if they who have such wonderful store of learning can not keep upright, we who fall short of such gifts can not but tumble. Of all men few have I regarded with the like admiration I felt for Sir Walter Raleigh, for in truth he did always appear to me a most inestimable sweet gentleman. I am heartily grieved"——

"Proceed with what you have to say on this infamous matter," said the queen sharply.

"That will I without further loss of time," replied the wily Cecil. "It chanced that my Lord Henry Howard and I going to the Bankside, got into a pair of oars just as the barge containing Mistress Throckmorton left the shore. My lord directed my attention to some one who sat in the barge cloaked up very close, whom I had not noticed, for in truth I had such respect for Mistress Elizabeth, believing, from her nearness to your majesty's person, that she was of a most honorable nature, that I could not entertain suspicion of wrong in anything that she did, and was not curious about her proceedings."

"Who was that person, think you?" eagerly inquired the queen.

"That know I not of mine own knowledge," answered Cecil, "for we being of the other side of the water could not have a very distinct sight of things so far off. I do not think it was Sir Walter Raleigh for a reason I will presently explain. The barge made for Durham house, which, knowing the suspicions that were afloat, created in us no small astonishment. Then we saw him in the cloak, land, with Mistress Alice and her cousin; and these three went up the steps into the house. This seeing, we knew not what to make of it; so for the satisfaction of my lord's curiosity and my own, we waited at a convenient distance. In half an hour or less, the three returned to the barge and went on their way; and I, thinking it could be nothing more than a passing visit, thought so light of it that we watched them no more. He in the cloak could not have been Sir Walter Raleigh, because my father did have speech of him at your majesty's command in his own house, at the very time I saw this person on the river. Knowing this, as I soon found out, I did not see any wrong in the visit of these young women with another person to Durham house; but my Lord Howard did offer me a wager, that Mistress Elizabeth had gone there to be married, and that he in the cloak was no other than her father, Sir Nicholas Throckmorton, who had good reason for seeking concealment, as it was given out he was like to perish for want of proper nursing."

"Now is it all made clear to us," exclaimed the queen, her face crimsoning with rage. "We have been cozened, cheated, and imposed upon; and doubtless they now laugh in their sleeves at finding us gulled so easily. By God's wounds, we'll let them know what it is to make sport of their sovereign."

"I wonder at their baseness," cried her ladyship with much asperity.

"'Tis not enough for them to do us the foulest dishonor we have received since we have been a crowned queen," continued her majesty, seemingly waxing more wrath every minute, "they must needs play a trick upon us! We are thought to be worthy no better hap by this false woman than for a stale to catch her woodcock Raleigh!"

"'Tis marvellous strange how such extreme impudency can exist," said Cecil very gravely.

"Get you to his chaplain, Sir Robert," added the queen, "He is one Burrel, in some repute for his learning, and doubtless may be found at Durham house. Question him of this marriage: for we would know if it hath taken place. If he answer you to the purpose, you shall come away and do him no hinderance—but if he be contumacious, or seem to hold back what he knoweth—straight

with him to prison: he shall there have time to repent him of his meddlesomeness. Delay not to report to us the minute you get aught worth the telling."

"I will be the most zealous intelligencer in your majesty's dominions," replied Cecil.

"My Lady Howard, we are for the presence chamber," said the queen, and straightway she passed haughtily out at the door with her attendant, but not before the latter and Sir Robert Cecil had, unseen by her majesty, exchanged a look in which there appeared a wonderful deal of meaning.

CHAPTER XI.

I can not eat but little meat,
My stomach is not good:
But sure, I think that I can drink
With him that wears a hood.
Though I go bare, take ye no care,
I nothing am a cold,
I stuff my skin so full within
Of jolly good ale and old.
GAMMER GURTON'S NEEDLE.

My masters, are you mad? or what are you? Have you no wit, manners, nor honesty, but to gabble like tinkers at this time of night? SHAKSPEARE.

It was getting deep into the evening. The prudent citizens had long closed their houses, and many of the more sober sort had retired to rest. Nothing disturbed the silence of the streets, but now and then the riotous singing of some prodigal gallants returning late from the tavern, with more wine in their pates than wit, with perchance the hoarse bawling of some of the city watch, chiding them for disturbing the night with their caterwauling; or mayhap a score of disorderly apprentices for the sake of diversion screaming fire, murder, and the like, from different places, till the whole neighborhood was in an uproar, and the watch running to and fro in strange perplexity as to where was the mischief. Now you might hear some particular clock striking the hour, and anon there was such a striking from all parts that it seemed as if there would be no end to it; like unto when chanticleer croweth in the early morning, there answereth to him another, and he is taken up by a third, and so on till the whole of the cocks round about have tried the strength of their voices.

So it fared in the city, and in Eastcheap more especially—which of all places was most noted for mad pranks and merry doings; but while such goings on proceeded outside, the little back parlor of Geoffrey Sarsnet, the mercer, as oft did echo with a very similar merriment. There he sat before an oak table having on it a bowl and drinking-horns, looking very portly in a buff jerkin; a jolly face and a merry eye seeming to mock the gravity of his gray beard and bald pate, and a loud, short laugh, bursting from his mouth ever and anon, said plain enough, of all conscience, that his thoughts were none of the saddest. Opposite to him, in singular fine contrast sat the meager form of the miser of St. Mary Axe, who, by the complacency of his withered aspect, had evidently forgiven Joanna the loss of the Venetian chain.

"Margery! Margery!" bawled the mercer, after he had looked into the bowl and found it empty of liquor. "By cock and pye, I'm no lover of jolly good ale and old, if we haven't drained it as dry—as dry as thy wit, thou ghost of a pickled herring. Haw! haw! haw!"

"Forsooth, thou art in a most facetious vein gossip," replied Gregory Vellum, who cared not for being laughed at when he had aught to gain by joining in the mirth.

"If I be not in the vein, the vein be in me," said the jolly mercer, with another laugh as loud as the preceding. "Here, Margery," cried he again—then sinking his voice, added, "Hang these old women, say I! They be as deaf as thy conscience, and as slow as thy comprehension. Is't not so, thou delectable pippin-face?"

"In truth they be exceedingly deaf and slow," answered the scrivener, with a wonderful gravity.

"The young ones for me—eh, Gregory!" continued the old fellow, with a knowing wink of his eye. "They have ears for anything; and as for going, I doubt them not, at an ambling pace, they would beat any colt that runs. Haw! haw! haw! Why, Margery, I say!"

"How, now? what do you lack, sweet master?" exclaimed a little old woman with a very pointed nose and chin, and sharp gray eyes, who appeared at the door.

"Another bowl, Margery!" replied Geoffrey Sarsnet. "And, prythee, brew it delicately, with good store of nutmeg and a famous toast in it."

"That will I, kind heart, and quickly," answered the old dame, fetching the empty vessel.

"I'faith, Margery, thou lookest as innocent as a sucking donkey," said the jolly mercer, with his usual laugh, as he gazed upon her uncomely face.

"An't please your goodness, I was always noticed for the innocency of my looks," replied the old dame very demurely.

"I doubt it not," cried her master; "and thine innocency was always respected, I'll be bound for it. Haw! haw! haw!"

"Indeed, you may say that," responded she. "For it is a most notable truth that no longer ago than five-and-twenty year last Martinmas"—

"Thou must then have seen a good forty years at least—an excellent fine age for innocency;" and then the old fellow chuckled again mightily.

"Fie on you for saying so, and I not fifty yet!" said Margery, her yellow physiognomy blushing with indignation at such an insinuation of her antiquity—the which, however, was no great way from the truth. "No longer ago than five-and-twenty year last Martinmas"—

"Thou wert put in the stocks for a wanton—an excellent fine proof of innocency, o' my life! Haw! haw! haw!" And then he gave the table a slap that made the horns jump again.

"What, I! I that have ever been the discreetest and virtuousest of virgins!" exclaimed the old woman, in a seeming monstrous to-do. "I'll be upon my oath I was never put in the stocks."

"Well, thou hast had exceeding good luck, then," replied the mercer, winking at his companion, and endeavoring to keep a grave face; but he succeeded not, for he presently burst out in the same short, loud laugh as at first.

"Nay, I'll tarry not to be made game of," cried she somewhat sulkily; and thereupon hurried out of the room.

"Mayhap, if she tarry to be made game of, then should none hurry to put her on the spit. Haw! haw! haw!" shouted her master, his eyes twinkling very merrily at the conceit.

"Methinks it would be but barbarous to make a roast of her," observed the scrivener, with a perfect seriousness. "And indeed she seemeth not very delicate eating."

"No more delicate eating than thou art; and I doubt not to find more juice in the fag end of a piece of dowlas, than thou canst boast of in thy whole body," replied the mercer, who, being of a well-fed person himself, held the other's lankness in seeming contempt. "But what sayest thou to a dainty young wench of some sixteen years or so—fresh and plump and tender as a chicken? Doth not thy mouth water at such fare—eh, Gregory?"

"In honest truth, I have no stomach for human flesh," answered the scrivener.

"Out on thee for a dull wit!" exclaimed the other. "I'll be hanged if thou hast more brains than a roast chestnut. But as thou canst not entertain me with thy discourse, see if thou canst tune up thy pipe for a song. A song—a song, Gregory!"

"Believe me, I have forgotten every tune but one," said the miser of St. Mary Axe in very serious fashion, "and that be the hundredth psalm."

"Psalm me no psalms! Dost take me for a puritan?" cried the jolly mercer.

"Nay, but it be an excellent sober tune, Geoffrey Sarsnet."

"Then shall it be the most unfit tune in the world over a full bowl. Haw! haw! haw!" shouted his companion in the same merry key as at first.

"Methinks I know of none other," said Gregory Vellum.

"Then ale of mine shalt thou never taste till thou hast bethought thee of something more to the purpose. So look to thy memory, and quickly."

"I do remember me there was a song I did use to affect in an idle hour when I was but an apprentice," observed the scrivener.

"Prythee, then, out with it!" exclaimed the other.

"Indeed, I have no voice for singing, gossip. Hem! hem!" and then the old fellow began to clear his throat very diligently, looking, or rather striving to look, exceeding modest all the time.

"I have asked thee not to sing with any other voice than thine own, so I must needs make the best of it," replied the jolly mercer very merrily.

"Hem! hem!"

"Nay, I would as lief sit with a tailor as with one that doth nothing but 'hem,'" said his companion, with a laugh as loud as ever.

"I will fall to it as well as I may," replied the scrivener. Then turning up his eyes to the ceiling, began in a wonderful shrill, trembling pipe—

"'When little birds sat on their nests'—

"Nay, but good gossip, I be not in most excellent voice," said he, ere he had got any further. "Hem, hem."

"It wants no conjurer to tell me that," answered his companion with a chuckle. "But not a drop of my good ale shall

moisten thy throat if thou dost not sing me the song before it be brought in."

"Hem, hem!" repeated the other quickly, for he had no objection to any good thing at another's expense. Then, with a lack-a-daisical look, the like of which it is impossible to conceive, he recommenced—

"When little birds sat on their nests,
And conies to the young wheat hied;
And flowers hung down their dainty crests,
And Philomel her sweet trade plied.
'With my heigh-ho!
Whether or no,
Kiss me but once before I go,
Under the tree where the pippins grow.'"

"I say nothing against the matter of thy ballad," here interposed the mercer; "for it be as exquisite foolish stuff as heart can desire. But if thou art not singing it to the hundredth psalm then never gave I honest measure."

"'Tis very like," replied the old miser gravely; "for I did tell thee I knew of no other tune."

"I'll have none on't. So look that thou sing the proper notes." At this, with a preliminary hem or two, Gregory Vellum did essay the second verse, much after the same die-away fashion as at first.

"'Twas then a lover and his lass,
Her rosy cheek with his acquaint"—

"Thou art at the psalm again, and be hanged to thee!" here exclaimed his companion.

"Indeed, then I knew it not; but I will take good heed I fall no more into that strain." And then he continued his ballad:—

"Had set them on the tender grass;
Whilst he thus fondly made his plaint.
'Singing heigh-ho!
Whether or no,
Kiss me again before I go,
Under the tree where the pippins grow.'"

"Thou art clean past all hope," cried Geoffrey Sarsnet; "for to one note of the ballad thou hast given a score of the hundredth psalm."

"Ah, did I so?—then in truth it did escape me unawares," replied the other, and resumed his ditty, the first two or three notes of the which seemed of a fitting tune; but the rest was the psalm beyond all possibility of contradiction.

"He kissed her once, he kissed her twice,
Though oft she coyly said him nay;
Mayhap she had him kiss her thrice
Before she let him get his way.
'Singing heigh-ho!
Whether or no,
Kiss me again before you go,
Under the tree where the pippins grow.'"

"Odds, my life! thou hast no more notes in thy voice than hath a cuckoo, who singeth the same sorry tune ever," said the jolly mercer. "But here comes the bowl," he added, seeing Margery enter with it in her hands, and place it before him.

"Ay, marry does it," said the old woman—all trace of her late displeasure having vanished—"and there is in it as fine a roasted crab as heart could wish for, with store of all proper things."

"By cock and pye, so there is!" exclaimed her master, gloating over it with his rosy face, and sniffing up the spicy steam with wonderful satisfaction, "Now, will I believe, Margery, all that thou hast said of thy exceeding virtue: nay, more, looking into thy face, I could take upon me to swear, with a safe conscience, that thou hast never had a lover in thy life." And thereupon he again burst out a laughing.

"Nay, you are wrong there, kind heart," replied Margery, with great complacency, "I have had no lack of lovers in my time, I warrant you. For, as I was a saying but now, it was just five-and-twenty years last Martinmas"——

"Since thou wert taken up by the constable on evidence that thou wert like to become chargeable to the parish: a singular fine proof that thou hast had lovers sure enough. Haw! haw! haw!" Thereat he slapped the table so hard that it did overturn one of the drinking horns he had just filled.

The old dame answered not, save by bouncing out of the room more angry than before.

"Mind it not, Gregory!" exclaimed the jolly mercer, as he beheld his companion trying to save the ale, by catching it in the empty horn, as it run through the chinks of the table.

"It be a shame to let such good liquor run to waste, gossip," he replied.

"'Twould have been all the same hadst thou swallowed it," observed the other; "for to give it thee is to waste it indeed; because thou dost never look the better for it. Here, hand up thy cannikin—though, in truth, thou deservest not to partake of such brave stuff, seeing that thou didst make such a miserable hand at thy ditty."

"To tell thee the exact truth," said the old miser, very earnestly, "though I have, at divers times, essayed many different songs somehow or another, yet know I not why, I never could find any other tune for them but the hundredth psalm."

"Then art thou but a goose at singing," replied his companion, finishing a draught of the good liquor before him, which, by the smacking of his lips, seemed to please his palate mightily, "but I will troll thee a song, Gregory, and one worthy to be mated with such right exquisite tipple as this."

"'Tis famous drinking, indeed!" remarked the scrivener, after a hearty draught of the same; "and the singing, I doubt not, will match it."

"Thou shalt judge," said the other; then, with a full round voice, and in a very jovial manner, he did give out the following strain:—

"I never had voice for a song that's choice,
And dainty ditties with me must fail:
Yet, weeks at a time, I fain would chime,
Whenever I strike up in the praise of good ale.
Then troul, troul,
Each hearty old soul,
That loveth the sight of a foaming bowl;
For there's naught in the land
He should care to command,
Who hath got such brave liquor as this at his hand.

"Full oft to the great have I held my prate—
But when I have had good ale enow,
I be not afeard to wag my beard
With any woman's son, be he high or low.
Then troul, troul, &c.

"Perchance I am shy when a woman is by—
Yet if but good ale my jerkin line,
Wife, widow, or maid—in sun or shade,
'Ere an hour may have passed, shall have sworn herself mine.
Then troul, troul, &c.

"Mayhap I've no store of the sage's lore—
But when some good ale is in my pate,
I'faith I can speak in Dutch or Greek,
And argue a whole college as dumb as their gate.
Then troul, troul, &c.

"It may be from fright I would run than fight—
Yet when with good ale beneath my skin;
With sword or with lance will I advance,
And leagured by my foes, cut through thick and thin.
Then troul, troul, &c.

"'Twill needs be my hap to have not a rap—
But when that good ale hath warmed my veins,
There be none like myself, so rich in pelf—
For ne'er can I count up the whole of my gains.
Then troul, troul, &c.

"I'm nigh unto Death for the lack of breath—
Yet if of good ale I am not scant,
Full many a bout shall I see out,
And never shall I know aught of pain or of want.
Then troul, troul,
Each hearty old soul,
That loveth the sight of a foaming bowl;
For there's naught in the land
He should care to command,
Who hath got such brave liquor as this at his hand!"

"Indeed it be an excellent fine song, gossip, and a merry," observed the old miser, with exceeding complacency.

"Somewhat better than thy miserable ditty, that be only fit to be sung over a kitten in a fit," replied the jolly mercer, with his customary laugh. "But hand up thy vessel, Gregory, for it hath acquired a marvellous resemblance to thyself—it be singularly empty: Haw! haw! haw!"

"In truth, it hath nothing in it," said the scrivener, losing no time in doing as he was bid. "But what hath become of the beautiful Joanna all this time?"

"Like enough, she be above stairs with some of her gallants," answered the other, carelessly.

"With some of her gallants?" exclaimed Gregory Vellum—his leaden visage in no small degree disturbed—"Prythee, tell me, be there many that consort with her?"

"Some score or two, at least," replied his companion.

"But dost approve of it?" asked the old miser, looking still less at his ease.

"To be sure I do, Gregory. Dost think I know not on which side of the bread the butter lies?—I tell thee, there be all sorts of notable gentlemen and brave gallants, come after her upon the fame of her infinite comeliness; and, doubtless, seeking of my favor, they order of me great store of fine things for their own wearing. Many's the piece of satin I have sold for a cloak; and as for velvets and silks, it be beyond calculation the store I have got rid of on that account. Mayhap, in time, some of them owe me a swinging bill, and I go with it to their houses, and, like enough, get no answer—then send I Joanna, and she bringeth me the money in a presently. Odds my life, man! seeing that she be of such profit to me, will I not let her do as she lists?"

"But dost not fancy it may like to damage her reputation?"

"Damage her fiddlestick!" replied the jolly mercer, with his ready laugh. "I doubt not she be well able to take care of herself; and if she grant them any favor, 'tis like she maketh them pay roundly for it."

This communication the miser of St. Mary Axe in no way seemed to relish, as was evident from the increasing uneasiness of his countenance.

"Surely thou wouldst be glad to see her honestly married to some reputable person," said he at last.

"Dost take me for an ass, Gregory?" sharply inquired the other. "Neither honestly nor dishonestly, with my good will: for should I not lose by it all the good custom that is now drawn to my house? If she marry, I must needs make the best I can of it; but I would ever hinder it if I could."

"Alack do not say so, gossip," cried his companion in very woful fashion, "for in honest truth I love her infinitely, and would marry her myself."

"Thou marry her!" shouted the mercer, pushing back his chair, and staring on the other in exceeding surprise.

"Ay, good Geoffrey, and have come expressly to talk to thee upon the business."

"Haw! haw! haw!" roared out his lusty companion.

"And, as she knoweth full well, have been courting of her for some time past."

"Haw! haw! haw!" repeated the jolly mercer louder than before.

"Nay, forsooth, it be no laughing matter to me, I do assure thee," continued the old miser, now a little nettled at the manner in which his communication had been received. "She hath had great store of gifts from me—owches, rings, a Venetian chain that cost me fifty crowns, besides sundry sums in rose nobles for her private expenses; and when upon showing her of what bountiful disposition I had been, I pressed her to name the nuptial day, she did earnestly assure me of her willingness, provided I succeeded in the obtaining of thy consent."

"Haw! haw! haw!" shouted the other, giving the table a thump that made it sound again, and looking as if he could hardly see out of his eyes, his cheeks were so squeezed up with laughing, "That be best of all. So thou hast been courting Joanna, eh, Gregory? Why thou shadow! thou lath! thou rush! thou first cousin to nothing!—what could mislead thee into such egregious folly? to say nothing of the presumption on't. To think for a moment such a withered apple-john as thou art should succeed against so many fine young knights and sprightly gentlemen!"

"Prythee, if I am not to have her to wife, let her return the gifts she had of me," cried the old miser with exceeding earnestness.

"If thou ever seest a glimpse of one of them, then shalt thou have better eyesight than is customary for one at thy time of life," replied the other, chuckling famously.

"Nay, I will go to law on it an' I have them not," cried the scrivener, starting up from his chair in a monstrous consternation at the thought of losing so many valuable things.

"Prythee do no such thing," answered the jolly mercer, as well as he could for laughing, "for of a surety thou wouldst be laughed out of every court in Christendom."

"Oh, I be utterly ruined and undone!" exclaimed the old miser wildly, as he sunk his hands in his face and dropped again into his chair.

"I doubt it be so bad as that," observed Geoffrey Sarsnet, "but it will be a good lesson for thee to take heed when thou dost again pay the piper, to see thou art not left alone in the dance."

Gregory Vellum replied not—for indeed he did stand very much in fear of his lusty companion, and did scarce dare utter a word: but no unfortunate wight looked ever in so disconsolate a mood.

"Come, drink, man! drink!" cried the mercer very merrily. "Care killed a cat, and if it could put a finish upon her nine lives, surely thy one must needs stand but a sorry chance. So drown care in the bowl, and thou shalt live all the happier for it."

The scrivener of St. Mary Axe then, as if in a desperate taking did begin to drink like a fish, in the which he was encouraged by the other, who joked and laughed without ceasing. At this time there entered one of a very impudent countenance, and monstrous swaggering manner. His hair was of the color of flax that hath been scorched in the dressing, and was combed back in a mighty coxcombical fashion from his forehead, where it was twisted up like unto a cockatoo's crest; his beard was of the like hue, and cut to a peak. Of his face it may suffice to say that it did express a singular fine opinion of the owner, and for assurance was not like to meet with its peer. For his age it seemed nigh unto thirty. He wore a high ruff and a doublet very conceitedly cut, that had once been much better than it was; with breeches stuffed out extravagantly—red hose cross gartered, and yellow rosettes in his shoes, a world and all too large. Sticking his right arm straight out, with his other arm a-kimbo, as soon as he had entered; with a very fustian voice, and high and mighty look, he thus addressed the twain:—

"Brave peers of France! sith we have passed the bounds
Whereby the wrangling billows seek for straits
To war with Tellus and her fruitful mines;
Sith we have furrowed through those wandering tides
Of Tyrrhene seas, and made our galleys dance
Upon the Hyperborean billows' crests,
That braves with streams the watery occident"—

"What, Ralph Goshawk!" cried the jolly mercer as he noticed the intruder.

"Come, sit thee down, and help us to finish this bowl." But the other, without minding the interruption, continued :—

"And found the rich and wealthy Indian clime,
Sought to by greedy minds for hostile gold"—

"Nay, give over bombasting out thy blank verse awhile," said Geoffrey Sarsnet. "In truth, Ralph, thou art exceeding like a gutter on a house-top in a storm of rain —thou art so abominably given to spouting. Haw! haw! haw!"

The miser of St. Mary Axe started with a sort of consternation, for either what he had drunk had fuddled him in some measure, or he liked not the stranger's appearance; seeing which, the latter made two or three dignified strides to where the scrivener sat, and spoke him thus :—

"And I, my lord, am Mandricard of Mexico,
Whose climate fairer than Tyberius,
Seated beyond the sea of Tripoly,
And richer than the plot Hesperides."

"I drink your worship's health, Master Mandricard," falteringly replied Gregory Vellum, with trembling hands raising the horn to his mouth. Thereat, the other proceeded after the same fashion.

"As for myself, I walk abroad a nights,
And kill sick people groaning under walls :"

At this the miser could not drink, he seemed struck with such a sudden fear.

"Sometimes I go about and poison wells."

"You don't say so!" exclaimed the frightened scrivener.

"And now and then to cherish Christian thieves
I am content to lose some of my crowns;
That I may, walking in my gallery,
See 'em go pinioned along by my door."

"Ha!" cried the frightened scrivener, in a long tremulous tone.

"Then after that was I an usurer,
And with extorting, cozening, forfeiting,
And tricks belonging unto brokery—
I filled the jails with bankrupts in a year,
And with young orphans planted hospitals,
And every moon made some or other mad."

"Good Lord, deliver us!" piously exclaimed the old miser. Then raising his voice, and looking very frowningly, the other recommenced :—

"'Twas I, my lord, that got the victory—
The god of war resigns his room to me,
Meaning to make the general of the world.
Jove viewing me in arms looks pale and wan,
Fearing my power should pull him from his throne,
Where'er I come, the fatal sisters sweat,
And grisly Death—by running to and fro
To do their ceaseless homage to my sword."

At this, Gregory Vellum trembling in every joint, and looking as pale as any of his parchment, threw himself on his knees before the other, with closed palms and uplifted eyes, and cried out as loud as his fright would allow,

"Good, your worship, don't kill me this time!"

"Haw! haw! haw!" shouted the jolly mercer, who with much ado, had refrained from laughing before. "Get thee up, Gregory, and fear nothing. It be only Ralph Goshawk, a young haberdasher from the Strand, as impudent a varlet as lives; but there be no harm in him, save that he be stage-struck. He goeth to the playhouse so oft, that his talk is all of fag-ends of plays; and so far gone is he in it, that if one ask of him the price of pack-thread, he will answer, like an emperor, in blank verse. Sit thee down, Ralph! and take me off this horn of good ale, or I will beat thee out of thy humor in a jiffy."

The young haberdasher took two majestic strides to a chair, which, in the like princely manner, he drew to the table; then, with a right royal salutation to the company, he tossed off his ale, and sat himself down very gravely; at the which Geoffrey Sarsnet laughed louder than ever. The scrivener, in some degree assured that the other would do him no harm, now returned to his seat; but the drink he had had, evidently was getting into his head, for he had a very vacant look with him, and he walked unsteadily.

"Come, drink, my masters, drink," exclaimed the mercer, filling the cups of his guests as fast as they were emptied. "And how weareth the night, Ralph?"

No sooner had the question been asked than he that was spoken to jumped up from his chair, placed his arms as before described, and thus answered :—

"The golden ball of Heaven's eternal fire,
That danced with glory on the silver waves,
Now wants the fuel that inflamed his beams;
And all with faintness and for foul disgrace,
He binds his temples with a frowning cloud."

Then sat him down.

"Thou villain, thou wilt be the death of me," exclaimed his lusty host, with his usual hearty laugh. "But can not we have a catch, my masters? I'm in a brave humor for singing. A catch, my masters—a catch!"

Up jumped the young haberdasher at this, exclaiming exactly after the same fashion as at first :—

"And in this sweet and curious harmony
The god that tunes this music to our souls
Holds out his hand in highest majesty
To entertain divine Zenocrate."

"A fig for Zenocrate and all her generation!" cried the jolly mercer. "I tell tell thee we will have a catch; what sayest thou, Gregory? Art for a catch?"

"I'd rather the hundredth psalm if it please thee, gossip," drawled out the scrivener, winking his eyes abit, as if his sight was none of the clearest.

"Be this a time to sing psalms, thou heathen!" bawled out he of Eastcheap. "Hast no respect for places? well, if we can not sing a catch, we will dance the brawls: so away with the tables and chairs, my masters, into the corner, and let's foot it bravely."

The tables and chairs were quickly moved by the jolly mercer, assisted by Ralph Goshawk, who could not, in the meanwhile, refrain from breaking out:—

"Now Hecuba and Ilium's honored line."

"Hang Hecuba and thee too!" cried Geoffrey Sarsnet; "and for the matter of that, Ilium may take his line and hang himself. Haw! haw! haw! Now then, my masters, at it in style, to the tune of 'Green Sleeves.'"

Then commenced a scene, the like of which hath rarely been looked on; for the jolly mercer began throwing about his lusty limbs, singing of the tune to the top of his voice, with now and then varying it with a loud whoop, as he slapped one or other on the back. He was seconded by Ralph Goshawk, who moved about as gingerly as though the flooring was of pins and needles, and he was mightily afraid of pricking his toes; and after him came the old miser, with his eyes half shut, and hanging of his head on one side, as he staggered here and there, as if without the slightest knowledge of what he was a doing. Such a din they kicked up as would have astonished a blacksmith. In the very midst thereof, Gregory Vellum made a stumble, and came with his back against the table, knocking down from it the lights, the horns, and every one thing that had been there, and putting the place in utter and complete darkness.

Immediately after the crash, the door opened, and there appeared at it the beautiful Joanna with a light, with Dame Margery close behind, peeping to know what such a terrible racket could be about. Seeing the mercer's daughter, the old miser, who had till now supported himself against the table with his hands, slipped down upon his nether end, staring at her as foolishly as you please, with his mouth open; and the young haberdasher marched forward two paces, and with his arms in the usual position, addressed her thus:—

"O gentle daughter of King Œdipus,
O sister dear to that unhappy wight
Whom brother's rage hath reaved of his right,
To whom thou knowest, in young and tender years,
I was a friend and faithful governor,
Come forth, since that her grace hath granted leave,
And let me know what cause hath moved now
So chaste a maid to set her dainty foot
Over the threshold of her secret lodge."

"Go it, fustian!" cried the mercer, giving the other so forcible a slap on the back that it put him quite out of his favorite position, and nearly sent him sprawling on the floor.

"Father, I wonder you should make such a clatter at this time of the night," said Joanna, as gravely as she could; for in truth the scene was extremely ludicrous: then she added to the old woman —"Margery, let them have lights." At the which, giving her candle to the other, she was hastening away, when she stopped suddenly, turned back, and said, "I think you had best go to bed, father, for 'tis exceeding late, and the neighbors will marvel hugely at your making such a disturbance;"—and then she went away.

"Well, the choicest of fooling must have an end," exclaimed the jolly mercer; "so we must e'en part. Ralph, thou hadst best see Gregory Vellum to his house in St. Mary Axe, for I doubt much, if he were left to find his way, he would get beyond the next gutter." At the which the young haberdasher answered only by staring at the open door very earnestly, and exclaiming thus:—

"Techelles, draw thy sword,
And wound the earth, that it may cleave in twain,
And we descend into th' infernal vaults
To hale the fatal sisters by the hair,
And throw them in the triple moat of hell,
For taking hence my fair Zenocrate."

"What, Zenocrate again? and be hanged to thee," cried out his lusty host, and thereat lent him such a kick of the breech, that it sent him bounce against the old woman, as she was a going out at the door.

"Ya!" screamed she, as loud as she could bawl, and took herself out of the room as if she had been shot out of it.

"Haw! haw! haw!" roared the jolly mercer, while the discomfited haberdasher stood at a little distance, diligently rubbing his nether end. "But haste thee, Ralph, and take this fellow away straight, for I am eager to have him out of my house."

At this Ralph Goshawk took two or three of his most majestic strides to

where Gregory Vellum now lay at his length, and with the assistance of his lusty companion, raised him on his legs. The old miser opened his lack-lustre eyes, and tried to look sensible, in the which, as may be supposed, he succeeded not at all.

"Oh, woman! lovely woman!" cried he, in his shrill treble; and thereupon hugged Ralph so closely in his arms that both of them came tumbling to the ground together.

"Odds my life, this fooling will be the death of me," exclaimed the mercer, his fat sides shaking with laughter; and then the two again essayed to raise the tipsy scrivener.

"Spare my money, and take my life," drawled out he, as he arrived at his perpendicular.

"Thy money's safe, I'll be bound for it; and as for thy life, 'tis the safer of the two, for it be not worth the taking." And then the mirth of Geoffrey Sarsnet burst out as loud as ever.

"Oh, my gold! my gold!" cried the old miser, knocking his hands together, and looking marvellously helpless and pitiful, as, supported by the arms of Ralph Goshawk round his waist, he dragged himself along. The young haberdasher accompanying him with a monstrous dignified slow march, and looking as tenderly on his charge, as if he had been some delicate princess; and the jolly mercer, following with the light, ever and anon, breaking out in his customary laugh.

"Gently with him!" exclaimed he. "Hold him up, or he will slip down again, and mavhay hurt his fool's head. Stop, let me put on his hat—and here's thine. Now, let me ope the door: and if thou meet any of the watch, say it be an honest friend of mine, and they will molest thee not; for I be in good odor with Master Constable, and have treated many of his brethren with a tankard. Good night to thee, old boy; and, prythee, keep thy body up if thou cast. Good night, Ralph!"

The young haberdasher no sooner heard the words that had just been uttered, than holding his charge firmly with one arm, he struck out the other, and replied "Thus Rhadamanthus spoke—"

"Hang Rhadamanthus and thee too!" cried the other, as he banged the street door in his face: and what Rhadamanthus spoke remaineth to this day a mystery. The jolly mercer, like a careful citizen, fastened the door, and saw that all things were safe in his house; and then went he up stairs to bed, singing very merrily:—

"Full oft to the great have I held my prate;
But when I have had good ale enow,
I be not afeard to wag my beard
With any woman's son, be he high or low."

CHAPTER XII.

Since Fortune's will is now so bent
To plague me thus poor man!
I must myself therewith content,
And bear it as I can.
SIR THOMAS WYATT.

Happy is he that liveth in such a sort;
He need not fear the tongues of false report.
LORD SURREY.

What comfort have we now?
By heaven, I'll hate him everlastingly
That bids me be of comfort any more.
SHAKSPEARE.

THERE was a goodly company in the parlor of mine host of the Ship at Chatham, whereof most of them seemed to be seafaring men from the vessels lying in harbor, shipwrights of the town, and the like. Some were a playing at shove-groat; others leaning out of the open bow-window watching the ships. Here one was upon a bench as fast as a church, —there another a nodding his head over the table, as if he would speedily follow his neighbor's example; many were a drinking, and some few discoursing very soberly; whilst ever and anon mine host (a very tapster-looking varlet, with a right rosy face and a short plump body) came in and out, serving of his customers with a tankard or so, and having something to say to all.

"Prythee, tell me what ship be that, Simon Mainsail?" inquired a stout handicraftsman of some sort, to a weather-beaten old mariner with a scarred face, who stood by him at the window.

"Which ship, messmate?" asked the other.

"That one that hath but lately come in," said the first.

"Oh! be that she squaring her yards?" observed the mariner inquiringly.

"Nay, I know not if she be squaring of her yards or her inches," replied the handicraftsman; "but it seemeth to me that she be just come to an anchor."

"That be the craft, ey?' answered his companion. "'Tis a pinnace of my Lord Admiral's, called the Disdain, and many a time and oft have I been afloat in her. She saileth well enough afore the wind —ay, my heart! as bravely as a witch in

a sieve; but she wears heavily in some weathers. I was in her off the Lizard, when we first had sight of the Spanish armada, and Captain Jonas Bradbury was her captain—a right gallant gentleman, and a skilful. Well, when my lord admiral had allowed the villain Spaniards, with all their host of big ships, amounting to 160 sail, to pass him by as they did, swaggering it along like very bullies as they were, we in the Disdain were sent to challenge them to the fight, at the which we lost no time, for we straight bore down upon the nearest, and discharged our ordnance at her. Then up came my lord admiral, in the ark Royal, giving to the first galleon of the enemy such a broadside as made her shiver in all her timbers. Close at his stern came Drake, in the Revenge, Sir John Hawkins in the Victory, and Sir Martin Frobisher in the Triumph, which last was the biggest of all our ships, and they soon began to fire away like mad. Other of our craft followed, and they of the armada, after a while, liked not our salutations, I promise you; for they that were nighest to us bore away as if Old Clooty was at their heels; but not before we had done them great damagement, burnt one of their largest ships, and took another, in the which we found 55,000 ducats, whereof I spent my share (for it was all divided amongst the sailors) in drinking confusion to all villain Spaniards."

"That was a proud time for Old England," remarked a bystander.

"Proud time!" exclaimed Simon Mainsail. "'Slife, messmate! I never think on't but I feel as if I were head and shoulders taller."

"Here be a brimming tankard, my masters!" cried my host, as he set a filled jug before two youths, who appeared by their looks to be but simple apprentices. "I doubt not 'twill warm your young hearts famously. 'Tis mild as milk, and soft as silk; and as good as can be drunk by any nobleman in the land. But the money, my masters—the money!"

"How much be the cost of it?" asked one very innocently.

"Why, to such noble young gentlemen I must say a groat; though I would not let those of meaner quality have it under threepence, I promise you." Thereat he nudged a bystander at the elbow.

"I thank you kindly, good sir," replied the youth; and then in a whisper added to his companion, "Tim, hast got twopence?—for no more than that have I."

"I have it to a farthing," said the other; and thereupon handed him the amount, which with his own he placed in the hands of mine host.

"I think you will find it right," observed the apprentice, as he noticed the tapster begin counting of it.

"One penny—two—three—a halfpenny and two farthings is it exactly, and thank your worship," replied mine host, with a monstrous serious countenance, while all in the room could scarce refrain from a laugh.

"Will you take a drink with us, good sir?" asked Tim modestly.

"That will I, and thank your honor," answered mine host, raising the untasted jug to his mouth. "So, your worships' very good health!"

"I thank you," said both at the same time. The two apprentices now watched the tapster very curiously, as they saw his head gradually fall back as he was a drinking of their liquor, and his stomach poke out as much, till he put down the tankard.

"Why, he's drank it all!" exclaimed one, opening his eyes with astonishment, as soon as he discovered the vessel was empty; at the which announcement the jaw of the other fell prodigiously, and all the company burst out into a roar of laughter.

"Your worship was good enough to ask me to take a drink, and methinks I have done your bidding famously," said mine host; and without ever a word more, he walked straight from the room, as if he had done nothing out of the common, leaving every one a laughing more than ever, and the two youths looking at each other as foolish as you please. The latter seemed as if they knew not whether to go or to stay. Without doubt they were monstrously ashamed, and would have given their ears never to have entered into a place whereof, it is on the face of it, they had had so little experience; but while they were a reddening and fidgeting about, and making up a resolution to take to their heels, in comes mine host with a full tankard, as if for another customer, and with such an exceeding comic face, that at the sight of it the company laughed louder than at first.

"Here be a somewhat larger tankard than the one I brought you in a while since," said the tapster, as he placed the vessel before the astonished youths. "But the liquor hath been drawn from the same tap, I'll warrant it. 'Tis in exchange for that I have swallowed. Drink, and make

your hearts merry, my masters. But let me give you this piece of advice, which you will, I doubt not, find of some profit to follow. Never ask another to drink with you till you have first gauged his stomach to see what he will hold."

"I'll gauge him without fail, depend on't, good sir," exclaimed Tim, in an excellent cheerful humor; and then all in the room expressed their delight at mine host's conceit, and many did order fresh tankards, they were so well pleased with the handsome way in which he had made amends to the simple apprentices for the trick he had played upon them.

"That be so like thee, Ephraim Spigot," observed one merrily.

"That be a sure thing," replied he, after the same fashion; "for of all my family I be reckoned most like myself." Thereat there was a laugh of course, and he took himself out in the midst of it.

"Knowest thou where that vessel hath been?" inquired the handicraftsman of his neighbor.

"I did hear she sailed to bring back Sir Walter Raleigh," replied Simon Mainsail.

"What, he that went from here on the late expedition?" asked his companion.

"Ay, messmate, the same," said the mariner.

"It hath been said that he be in disgrace at court, for that he will not splice himself unto a gentlewoman of the queen's choosing," observed another seafaring man.

"Now, I heard from my gammer," said an artificer—"and my gammer got it from her gossip, and her gossip had it from a cousin of hers, who is a servingman to some person of worship in London—that this Sir Walter Raleigh hath fallen out with the great Earl of Essex, and that they were nigh coming to blows before the queen's majesty, the which put her into so monstrous a fret, that she straightway forbid them her presence."

"'Tis said that this Raleigh be a famous conceited fellow," remarked another, "and spendeth as much on his back as would clothe a whole county."

"What dreadful extravagance!" exclaimed the handicraftsman. "Why can not he be content with a jerkin of a moderate price, such as might become any honest man, and give the rest to the poor?"

"Why, messmate, thus runs the log," replied the old mariner, hitching up his slops: "If so be he be ordered to dress his vessel after one fashion, he must needs do it, or be put in the bilboes for a mutineer. Mayhap he hath had signals from his admiral to have his rigging smarter than ordinary, and like a good seaman he hath obeyed orders. As for his hanging astern at court, for not consorting with such as his betters choose for him, I have seen none that have taken soundings there, therefore have I no chart to go by to lead me to the truth; and whether he have come to an engagement with Lord Essex, know I as little; but let him have sailed on either tack, or, for the matter of that, on both, I see nothing in it discreditable to his seamanship."

"I heard from a very honest intelligencer that he was to be fetched back from his command in huge disgrace," observed one of the artificers.

"Mayhap," replied Simon Mainsail: "the very best man that walks a plank can't always have fair weather with his officers, albeit he have no fault in him: for on one watch they shall be in this humor, and the next in one that is clean contrary. 'Slife! it be the difficultest thing that is for a fellow to warp out o' harbor without meeting with a squall from some of 'em. As for Sir Walter Raleigh, 'tis like enough I be as familiar with his trim and seaworthiness as any, seeing that I served as gunner under him in Drake and Norris's expedition to the Groyne, in the year eighty-nine; and I can say this much, that never met I a more proper commander. He be none of your thundering great ships that bear down upon us smaller craft, as if they would swamp every mother's son of us; but he hath often and often crept up along side of me, and spoke about gunnery and such matters with as much cunning as if he had been at load and fire all his life. And as for his spirit,—after we landed in the bay of Ferrol, I saw him bear up among the Spaniards at Puente de Burgos, after a fashion that reminded me only of that right gallant officer his kinsman, Sir Richard Grenville."

"And what did *he*, neighbor?" asked the handicraftsman.

"What did he, messmate?" replied the veteran. "Why, he did the gallantest thing that ever was known on the high seas. You shall hear, for it be marvellously worth the telling. You see there was a fleet sent out in the year ninety-one, under the command of Lord Thomas Howard, consisting of six ships royal, six victuallers, and a few pinnaces, whereof Sir Richard Grenville was vice-

admiral, in the Revenge, in the which I had gone on board as master-gunner; and this expedition, like unto the one that sailed from here awhile ago with Sir Walter Raleigh, had for its object the surprising of the Plate fleet, belonging to the villain Spaniards, as it rendezvoused at the Azores, coming from America. Somehow or another the pestilent knaves, the enemy, had wind of it, and they sent a fleet of fifty-three of their biggest ships of war to act as convoy; of the which we knowing nothing, were quietly taking in water at Flores, when down they came upon us. All hurried on board to weigh anchor and escape, as there was no fighting against such odds. But Sir Richard Grenville, having seen every one of his men embark, was the last to leave the shore; and by this necessary delay the Revenge was left alone. He seeing that there was no hope of recovering the wind, knew nothing was possible but to cut his mainsail, tack about, and be off with what speed he might, or stay and fight with all that could come up with him; but though the enemy had surrounded his ship in such a way as to leave him little chance of escape, and though ninety of his men were on the sick list, and only a hundred able for duty, he was not the fellow to turn from a parcel of villain Spaniards; so he had everything prepared for action, and bore down to force a squadron that stood on his weather bow.

"There, my messmates, was a sight to see," continued the old mariner, his honest weather-beaten face glowing at his own narration: "one ship attacking a whole squadron! And the gallant Grenville was nigh being as successful as his great heart merited, for divers of the villain Spaniards springing their loof, fell under his lee; but a cursed big galleon of fifteen hundred tons gained the wind, and bearing down on the Revenge, did so becalm her sails that neither could she make way or obey the helm. You may have a notion, messmates, of what sort of a customer this galleon was like to be, when I tell you that she carried three tier of guns on each side, and discharged eight foreright from her chase, besides those of her stern ports. Well, as ill luck would have it, while we were peppering away at this monster in such sort as soon made her glad to sheer off, two of the like kind boarded us on the starboard, and two on the larboard; but we minded 'em not a whit—nay, we beat 'em off, one after another, big as they were, till we had fought some sixteen of them for the space of fifteen hours, two of which we sunk and two made complete wrecks, and the rest we handled pretty rudely, I promise you.

"But how fared we all this time, my messmates? Scarce one of us escaped—forty as brave fellows as ever trod a deck were sent aloft, where 'tis to be hoped they'll be well cared for; and of the rest scarce any were left without something to show of the sort of employment they had been at. I got this slash across my figure-head, with a bullet through my starboard fin, and another near the main hatchway, all along of those villain Spaniards. Sir Richard, who had not left the upper deck for eight hours after he was first wounded, which was in the early part of the action, was then shot through the bulwarks; and as they were repairing the damage, he received another bullet, and saw the doctor regularly capsized alongside of him. But the Revenge was treated worse than all; for when the morning broke she was nothing but a naked hull, having received as many as eight hundred shot of great artillery, which those bullies of galleons had fired into her, whereof some were under water: her masts were beat overboard—her tackle split to ribands—her upper works levelled to the water's edge; and she was altogether in so pitiful a condition that she moved only with the motion of the billows.

"For all that, my messmates, Sir Richard wasn't for striking his flag; but proposed to sink the ship rather than fall into the hands of such notorious villains, in the which he was seconded by myself and some few of the crew; but the rest not being of the like spirit, compelled him to surrender,—and this, methinks, rather than his wounds, caused him to die soon after."

"There went a noble heart!" cried one of the seafaring men.

"In truth, he was a gallant gentleman," said the handicraftsman; and others made like ejaculations, for all had listened with exceeding interest to the old man's stirring account of the fight.

"But how got you out of their clutches, Simon Mainsail?" asked one; "and how did they behave to you?"

"'Slife! they used me like a dog, messmate," replied the veteran, in a monstrous indignation; "my wounds were most infamously handled; and how I recovered under such barbarous treatment is a marvel to me. But we were all served alike, clapped in irons, and treated with mouldy biscuit and bilge-water, till we came to an anchor at

Cadiz, when we were paraded through the streets, accompanied by shoals of papist priests, soldiers, and a bloodthirsty mob, yelling at the sight of us, as if they had reason to boast of their victory. It was given out that we were to be hanged, which sent some of us on our beam-ends at the thought of it; but I told 'em not to despair, and set them up to a thing which made them put their helms up in a presently. You must know, messmates, that these Spaniards hate us for not caring a breath of wind for their images, relics, and such like popish abominations, and curse us in their hearts for heretics; but the priests are mightily pleased at the thought of converting a protestant, as they look upon it as a sort of victory. So we got one of our crew who understood their patter, to say we would fain change our religion: thereupon came father this and father t'other, who preached to us by the hour, and very easily persuaded our whole company to cross ourselves, to kiss this image, and the other image, and assent to whatever they directed. Then, seeing us such good catholics, we were taken out of our chains—our victuals became of a better sort, and they kept not so sharp an eye on us as they did. The end of all this was, one night we broke out of prison very quietly, got into some boats that were high and dry on the beach—with them boarded a ketch that lay at anchor in the bay; and having found the crew asleep, took possession of her without a blow; and in the morning we were far out at sea, better protestants than ever, making for Old England, with a whole crew of villain Spaniards our prisoners."

"I'faith that was well done!" exclaimed one; in the which all seemed to assent, especially the apprentices, who, having finished their tankard, had grown bold enough to express their approval of the old mariner's conduct.

"I should like to beat a Spaniard hugely," said Tim to the other, very bravely.

"Suppose he stand upon his weapon and will not be beat of thee—what then?" asked his companion.

"Why a—" observed Tim, somewhat as it were in a sort of hesitation—"I would e'en tell him go hang for a knave, and let him go."

"Walk in, my masters—walk in, I pray you!" cried out mine host as he ushered into the room two serving-men, who looked by the dust on their jerkins and long boots, that they had come of a journey. "There be room enough and to spare, I warrant you: and if so be you are as dry as are the roads, doubtless you will be all the better for a wetting."

"What sayest thou, Diggory, shall we have a tankard?" asked one of the other as they swaggered themselves into a seat.

"Ay, Peter, let it be a tankard," replied Diggory.

"That you shall have, and of the best," said Ephraim Spigot, "and 'tis to be hoped 'twill enable you to drink away your drought, and draught away your drink." And away went the portly tapster, with a loud chuckle at his own conceit.

"Doth that fellow laugh at us?" said Peter with exceeding fierceness. "Nay, and by goles I'll rap him over the pate an' he do."

"Prythee do not," said his companion urgently, "for rememberest thou what Sir Nicholas Throckmorton said—'Mention my name on no account, and of all things keep out of brawls.'"

"Ha! so said he sure enough, Diggory," replied the other, "I mind it well, and will be as close upon this business as if I knew it not. Nay, if there be any so daring as to say I be Sir Nicholas Throckmorton's serving-man, I'll swear he lies in his throat, and slit his weasan for him."

"Dost think Stephen Shortcake will be long, Peter?" asked Diggory.

"Indeed, I can not say," responded he sharply. "To tell thee the truth, Diggory, I like him not; for when I wanted to cut off that impudent varlet's ears that did seem to dog us so as we came along, he would on no account let it be; and did give me a rating for seeking to endanger the reputation of our mistress by my quarrelsomeness. 'Slife, I take him to be a very precise fellow, Diggory."

"Here you are, my masters!" cried mine host bringing in the liquor and setting it before his customers, "and never tasted you better stuff, I'll be bound for it."

"Our master, Sir Nicholas Throckmorton, hath better liq—— Hang thee, Diggory, what dost tread on my toes for!" exclaimed Peter, cutting himself short in the middle of his speech, and making an exceeding wry face.

"Here's the money, good sir," said Diggory in a civil manner to his host, "and doubt I not the excellency of your liquor, believe me."

"I'll believe any one who pays without being asked for his reckoning," re-

plied Ephraim Spigot with a knowing look; and thereupon proceeded out of the room.

"I marvel at thee, Peter," exclaimed the other, immediately mine host had turned his back, "thou wouldst have begun thy brawling had I not stopped thee."

"'Slife! and shall a paltry tapster have better ale than our master?" cried Peter indignantly. "By goles, I could out with my tool and beat the knave into shavings."

"Prythee be quiet, and take a drink," said Diggory.

"Well, here's to thee, and confusion to all beggarly knaves that can not fight their way," replied his companion, taking a hearty swill at the tankard.

"How look the roads, my master?" exclaimed an honest-looking yeoman in the next corner.

"Why, but indifferently, good sir," responded Diggory, with a like civility. "Indeed, I may say that ever since I left the house of my master, Sir Nicholas Throck—Hang thee, Peter, what dost pinch me so for?" cried he, turning sharp upon the other.

"'Slife man, thou wert a saying Sir Nicholas Throckmorton's name, which be against the law," said Peter in a whisper, which was overheard by every one in the room.

"Thou didst right to interrupt me then," replied Diggory. "But prythee don't pinch quite so hard again," and then *he* took a hearty swill at the tankard.

"All that be not seafaring men be cowards!" cried out a drunken boatswain, as he woke up from his sleep on the bench.

"Thou liest, dog!" shouted Peter, drawing out his rapier, "I be no seafaring man, yet will I prove myself valiant upon thy villanous body."

"Have at thee, then!" exclaimed the seaman, endeavoring to stand up and draw his weapon.

"Peter! Peter!" cried Diggory, beating his fist against the other's back to make him attend. "Rememberest thou the law? Peter, I say, thou knowest there must be no brawling. Put up thy weapon, Peter, I prythee!"

"For shame upon you, my masters!" exclaimed Simon Mainsail, running in between the combatants, and assisting with others to make them desist of their intended violence; whilst the two apprentices, like prudent youths, as soon as they saw there was like to be a fighting with swords, took to their heels.

"No brawling, I pray you, my masters?" exclaimed mine host, rushing into the room as if with a fear of mischief.

"Make not an honest man's house a place for the shedding of blood," cried the handicraftsman.

"Hang him, villain!" shouted Peter, endeavoring to get at his opponent, who was held from him by the bystanders. "Shall he call me a coward because I be no seafaring man? He lies in his throat! By goles, I'll cut off his ears for't."

"Peter! Peter, I say!" cried Diggory, pulling and thumping him with all his might.

"'Slife! man, dost want to pound my back to a powder!" bawled out Peter to his companion. "I will let out my valor upon him. I'll cut him over his knave's pate at least. Nay, our master, Sir Nicholas Throck"——

"Put up thy weapon, varlet, this instant!" angrily exclaimed Stephen Shortcake as he entered the room and seized his uplifted arm? "How darest thou draw upon any man? Wert not expressly forbid to brawl and to mention names? and I leave thee only for a short space, and find thee a doing of both. Up with thy weapon, or thou shall rue it."

"Peter slowly and somewhat reluctantly put away his rapier, and the words of the seafaring man hurried him out of the room.

"O' my life thou art the most pestilent knave that lives," cried the old butler to the pugnacious serving-man. "Thou art like to bring us all into trouble by thy villanous quarrelsomeness. What need hadst thou with a drawn weapon in thy hand? nay, I marvel hugely that thou shouldst be allowed a weapon at all."

"He did say that all were cowards except seafaring men," replied Peter doggedly, "and I could not stand by and disgrace our master by stomaching it."

"Thou hast disgraced thy master as it is," said Stephen Shortcake, looking very wrath at him. "But see that thou offend not again, or it shall go hard with thee. And I am ashamed of thee, Diggory, that thou shouldst have stood by and hindered him not," he added, turning sharp round upon the other.

"Nay, I do assure you, I did essay all means to withhold him from it," answered Diggory. "I did remind him that our master, Sir Nicholas—Oh!"

"Hang thee, thou babbling knave!" cried the enraged old man, as he seized

the uncautious Diggory by the ear—"Is this the way thou obeyest thy master's orders? O' my life, I know not which is the most pestilent villain of the two. Now I charge thee stay here till I return; and if there be any more prating, or the least stir to a brawl, at thy peril be it." So saying, Stephen Shortcake took himself out of the room, leaving the two serving-men mightily intent upon their best behavior, and the rest of the company in a famous marvelling at the strangeness of their conduct. He then proceeded up a winding flight of stairs to the first landing, where there was a door, at the which he knocked, and being bid come in, he did enter accordingly.

"Well, good Stephen—what news have you?" inquired the beautiful young wife of Sir Walter Raleigh, who sat leaning on her arm looking out of the casement, attired as if she had but just come off a journey.

"Indeed, sweet mistress, I have very comfortable news," replied the old butler respectfully. "I did make inquiries of divers worshipful captains and men of the sea, and some have told me, that they know for certain my honored master is on board a vessel that hath but lately come in."

"'Tis comfortable news indeed, Stephen," said Dame Elizabeth, brightening up exceedingly. "But how looks he? Doth he ail anything? Hath he prospered in his voyage? When shall I see him?" she then eagerly inquired.

"Of his looks I could learn but little," answered Stephen Shortcake; "seeing that I have met with none that have had speech of him since he left here; and of his voyage know I no more, for there were none who were informed of it. And as for when you shall see him, sweet mistress! methinks 'twill not be long first, as I did lose no time in despatching a trusty boatman with your note, who hath promised me to use all speed, and to give it into Sir Walter's own hand."

"Thanks, good Stephen!" exclaimed she. "I am glad the information I received that he was spoke with off the coast, hath proved correct; for the rest, I doubt not, I shall have it from himself. But get you some refreshment, good Stephen, for you have had a hard ride, and doubtless do require something."

"Nay, if it please you, I would rather be a getting of some dainty for yourself," observed the old man. "For you have scarce tasted bit or sup since we left Aldgate."

"I have no heart for anything till I see Sir Walter," replied the affectionate woman. "But I thank you for your painstaking; and do insist upon it, you presently procure for yourself, whatever proper thing the house affords."

"I thank you heartily, sweet mistress!" exclaimed he, "and will haste to do your gracious bidding."

When Stephen Shortcake had left the room, Dame Elizabeth turned again to the casement, and gazed among the vessels as if with a hope of finding out the ship in which was her beloved husband. All at once she did behold a boat putting off from one, upon which she kept her eyes, as it made for the shore, pleasing herself with the fancy, that therein might be him she most wished to see. She could just discern two persons (besides the boatman), one of whom, as far as she could make out in the distance, looked the taller and nobler of the two. "'Tis he!" she exclaimed joyfully, as she thought she recognised his figure; and then added, pressing her hands over her throbbing breast, "be still, my heart!"

In a few minutes there could be but little doubt of it—for the one she had observed, as if noticing her at the casement, did suddenly stand up in the boat and whirl his hat round and round his head; whereupon she took her kerchief and waved it in the air;—her heart all the whilst seemingly being in as great a flutter. Then it was seen, as they made the land, that the two were Sir Walter Raleigh and Master Francis. She watched them very earnestly as they neared the house, and when she lost sight of them she rose from the casement—then sat herself down again—while her heart seemed so to beat, and her countenance became so pale and agitated she scarce knew what to do; and when Sir Walter's quick step was heard upon the stairs, she could only stand by catching fast hold of the arm of the chair, the which she had not let go till she found herself within the embrace of her loving husband.

"After all said and done, dear Bess," said Sir Walter Raleigh, when they had exchanged their affectionate greetings, "I think we shall live as pleasant a life of it as heart can desire."

"I hope so, dear Walter," replied his beautiful young wife, "yet I have had my doubts. There have been rumors afloat to your disadvantage, which have given me infinite uneasiness, and I oft-times thought that our marriage had come to the queen's ears, and she in con-

sequence thereof, had resolved on your disgrace. Indeed it made me exceeding sore of heart."

"Tush, girl, care not for it!" exclaimed Raleigh. "'I did hear of its being whispered before I left here, and thereat did write Cecil an ambiguous letter which, methinks, should by this time have put an end to all rumors. I know not why it is, yet have I been marvellously ill used in the matter of this expedition, for the queen kept not her faith with me, and hath put me to a sore trial of my patience. But I doubt not the great success that hath attended this adventure, will not only create in her majesty a desire to make me amends for what unkind things I have endured, but will win her pardon for having married without her approval."

"Hast had great success, Walter?" inquired Dame Elizabeth anxiously.

"Ay, that have we, sweet Bess," he replied. "'Tis true I have most unjustly been called from my command, but before I left the fleet I gave orders that one half of it, with one of the queen's ships under the command of Sir John Burgh, should cruise off the coast of Spain, while Sir Martin Frobisher, with the rest, should lay in wait off the Azores; for I had great expectation that there we should have the good hap to intercept the Plate fleet. Well, I have so long been kept back by contrary winds, that as I entered this port, I was overtook by a fast-sailing vessel, that hath assured me on credible authority, that Frobisher's squadron fell in with the Indian ships as I expected; and hath taken a carrack of the burthen of 1,600 tons, valued at half a million sterling—which most assuredly is the largest and richest prize ever had from the enemy."

"Indeed, that doth give me exceeding comfort," cried she very joyfully.

"I doubt 'twill be the best recommendation to the queen I have been able to show this many a day," added Sir Walter.

"I do think, myself, it cometh most opportunely," observed his devoted wife. "It hath put to flight all my foolish fears, and methinks I can allow myself now to hope that all will soon be well. We will then be so happy—so very happy, won't we, dear Walter?"

"Ay, dearest, without a doubt," he replied.

"Open, in the queen's name!" shouted out the voice of one who beat the door rudely.

"Ah!" screamed Dame Elizabeth, starting from the fond embrace of her husband, and trembling in every limb.

"Hush, Bess, 'tis nothing," said Sir Walter in an encouraging tone, and went to open the door. "Ha, Sir George Carew, right welcome!" he added, as he noticed who it was that had disturbed them; and then one of a military appearance, and somewhat serious countenance, walked into the room with his rapier drawn.

"I am sorry that I am come of so unwelcome an errand," said he. "But I have the queen's commandment to arrest you, Sir Walter Raleigh, and you, Mistress Elizabeth, and convey you prisoners to the Tower."

"Ah, I was afraid of this—I have ruined thee," exclaimed Dame Elizabeth in a piteous accent, as she fell sobbing on his shoulder.

"Bess!" cried Sir Walter in a grave voice, as he lifted her from him, and looked reprovingly in her face. "Remember, that thou art my wife!"

No sooner had these words been spoke than the beautiful woman, as if with a sudden effort to conquer her feelings, cast back her head proudly; and walking with a truly majestic carriage up to Sir George Carew, said in a firm voice, "I am ready, sir."

CHAPTER XIII.

Other sins only speak, murder shrieks out.
The elements of water moisten the earth,
But blood flies upward and bedews the heavens.
WEBSTER.

This yellow slave
Will knit and break religions; bless the accursed;
Make the hoar leprosy adored! place thieves,
And give them title, knee, and approbation,
With senators on the bench. SHAKSPEARE.

There is the murderer, for ever stabbed—
Yet can he never die. FORD.

THE miser of St. Mary Axe sat in a worm-eaten arm chair, in a narrow chamber, of comfortless and mean appearance, before a table on which were sundry parcels wrapt up in dirty bits of rag, and a pair of small scales; and he was engaged in counting out a store of gold pieces from an old stocking. His face looked somewhat sickly, and his eyes yellowish; and his hands shook much as he handled his treasures. There was a window in the room, but it was so covered with dirt,

and the broken panes so pasted over with parchment, that it gave only sufficient light to discern the squalidness and filth of the place, one or two broken chairs, a rickety table, some bundles of papers covered with dust, a great chest, with a padlock, that stood open behind him, and himself—the owner of all. Besides his usual dress, which never varied, he had on his spectacles, with which he carefully scrutinized every coin, and weighed some; now and then giving quick suspicious glances around the room, and starting fearfully at every little noise. It is not to be supposed that he held his peace, for he did talk continually, as if for company; and on divers subjects, much at the same time, like unto one whose mind wandereth somewhat.

"Forty-nine—fifty," said he closely examining the last piece he had taken from the stocking. "Methinks this be exceeding light. It hath been clipped, doubtless. Mayhap it hath been in the hands of some vile Jew? No matter—it must with the rest. Alack! how my head do ache! Fifty-one—fifty-two. What a dolt have I been to drink so much of his villanous ale, knowing that it doth ever get into my pate! Fifty-three—fifty-four. That Geoffrey Sarsnet be a most ungodly varlet—he liketh not the hundredth psalm! Fifty-five—fifty-six. Ha! this has a crack in it, sure enough. And that he be a knave there can be no question, seeing how he entertained my proposal of marrying Joanna; and doth allow her to retain the many costly things she hath tricked me of. Fifty——this be rather of a dull color. Certes, I have had a good escape from that seductive Jezabel. Fifty-seven—fifty-eight. But she hath most shamefully cozened me. I am glad I am quit of her. Fifty-nine—here be as clean a face as if 'twas fresh from the mint. Oh, that I could make her give up that which she hath robbed me of! Sixt—— Ha!—what noise be that!"

The old miser looked about him very earnestly, and listened in a great tremble—for some sort of noise was heard.

"It be the wind, doubtless," continued he, "for it doth at times make great disturbances. Sixty-one—sixty-two. I marvel what hath become of my pestilent nephew; but I am hugely delighted that he hath taken himself off. I did think he had robbed me, knowing he be a most dishonest caitiff—as instance the excellent candle-ends he stole of me; but I have searched, and missed nothing. Sixty-three—surely this piece be not good—it hath such a marvellous copper look with it. If any one were to give him a knock on his knave's pate now, then should I be rid of all fear. But it be the right weight to a hair. Sixty-four—sixty-five. He hath been monstrously urgent concerning of his father, yet hath he got nothing of the truth from me, for all his blustering. Sixty-six. 'Twould be most unnatural were one of my years unable to deceive such a boy as that. Sixty-seven—sixty-eight. He doth not like the hundredth psalm, the reprobate! and as for her, she be the impudentest baggage that lives. I would I could get back what she hath so infamously cozened of me! Sixty-nine—seventy. That be just right:" he added, as he proceeded to put his store of gold back by handfuls into the old stocking; and whilst he did so his eyes seemed to glisten with exceeding gratification.

"'Tis well I married not that villanous jade—a murrain on her!" exclaimed he. "Else the infinite pleasure I find in such brave sight as this, should I not know for long; for all would go to satisfy her prodigal humors. What a dolt was I to let her have of me such store of costly things; and he such an ungodly wretch as not to like the hundredth psalm! My head doth seem to split of this aching. Oh, 'tis an exquisite fine sight to see so much lovely gold!"

"'Tis an exquisite sight, indeed!" said a gruff voice, at his elbow.

"Mur—mur—mur—murder!" screamed Gregory Vellum, as loud as his fright would allow, and letting drop some of the gold upon noticing two fierce-looking men standing over him, regarding his treasures with eyes kindling with excessive covetousness.

"Take that for thy bawling!" exclaimed one, hitting him sharp over the pate with the pommel of his dagger, "and if thou breathest but a sound loud enough to be heard within a yard of thee, I'll slit thy weasan the same minute."

"Nay, what be the use of sparing such an old hunks," observed the other, who looked the most desperate cut-throat of the two. "Let me give him a dig in the ribs, 'twill do his business for him, I'll warrant."

"'Sblood! be not such a fool, Tony," replied the other, sharply. "He hath more hoards than what we see; and how shall we find 'em, if we make him not point 'em out to us?"

"True, Jack!" responded the other. "So let's bind him whilst we secure the

prog around, then will we make him tell where lieth the rest." Then these villains bound the miser, with cords, to the chair on which he sat; he, too frightened either to move or speak, made no noise, save that of his teeth chattering together, and rolling of his eyes (from which the spectacles had fallen), with extreme fear, as he turned his looks from one to the other.

"'Slife! this be a proper windfall, Tony!" cried he that was called Jack, as he proceeded to pour into his hat the contents of the stocking. "But I did tell thee the old miser was a bird worth the plucking."

"So thou didst, bully rook!" answered Tony. "But let us count all the coin into thy hat, that we may the easier divide it."

"That will not I," replied the other, with a loud laugh. "Find a stocking for thyself, man, and mayhap it shall fit thee as doth this me."

"What, shall we not share alike, and be hanged to thee?" asked Tony, fiercely, as he undid one of the parcels done up in a dirty rag. "Nay, I care not," he added, and instantly swept all the parcels into his hat. "Each of these be full of Harry the Eighth's nobles."

"Nay, then, let us share, Tony," cried Jack, his forbidding visage now seeming disturbed at the other's greater good fortune, "'twas but a jest of mine."

"'Sblood! I care not, jest or no jest!" responded Tony with a chuckle of satisfaction, as he poured out the contents of each dirty rag, "Keep to thy stocking—I'll keep to my rags."

"Hang thee for a villain!" muttered the other, and then turning round, went straight to the open chest, the which seeing, made the old miser utter a faint exclamation—a sort of wailing that denoted both terror and despair.

"'Slife! art weary of thy life?" exclaimed Jack, threatening the trembling scrivener with his drawn dagger, which he held as if about to plunge into the old man's side, and giving him a look which seemed to make his very blood turn cold within him.

"Here be the best prize of all!" cried Jack, as he began searching of the chest.

"Ha! what hast got?" inquired Tony, hastening to the side of his companion. "I'faith, Jack, this be a prize indeed!" continued he, as following the other's example, he eagerly commenced hauling out of the chest divers pieces of rich silver plate, such as candlesticks, tankards, drinking cups, plates, and the like, whereof each appropriated as much as he could lay his hands on; yet seemed he to grumble much at whatever his associate did get into his possession. The spirit of avarice was at work in the hearts of both, and the great wealth each one found himself possessed of, only made him all the greedier to have more.

"If this be not the making of us for life, I know not what filching means," observed one, with his eyes glowing with unlawful pleasure at the costliness of the spoil he was making his own.

"We will turn honest upon the strength of it," said the other, equally busy at his work. "We will buy us some place of lordship in the country, and swagger it as bravely as any knight of the shire."

"And why not become parliament men?" asked the first. "They that have been knights of the post will make better knights of the shire than any, seeing that they be already marvellous skilful in fingering the people's money."

"Ha! ha!—that be true enough," exclaimed his companion. "So knights of the shire we must needs become; and then will we have a law made that rogues shall be protected in their calling till they turn honest."

"Oh!" groaned Gregory Vellum in all a miser's agony, as he beheld his secret treasures passing away from his custody.

"Ha! What, dost move?—dost breathe?" cried Jack, scowling at him so ferociously that it did set his teeth a chattering all the more.

"'Slife!—let's finish him at once," said Tony. "Then will he tell no tales. Methinks we shall have enough to do to get away what we have found without seeking for more."

"I tell thee we will pluck him bare first," replied the other ferociously. "Such a prize comes not in our way oft, therefore are we the more bound to make the most of it we can. For mine own part, I'll risk Tyburn rather than leave him so much as would keep his miserly old carcase for an hour."

"Well, hang him for a villain, I care not," observed his associate. "But what have we here?" he added, as on putting his hand into a goblet he did bring out of it sundry gold rings, with precious stones therein.

"Nay, I must have some of those!" cried Jack, making a snatch at them.

"I'll see thee hanged ere I will let thee," replied Tony, quickly placing the goblet out of the other's reach.

"'Sblood!—but I will be even with thee!" muttered his associate, regarding him with a threatening visage, which he seemed in no way to heed.

"Tush!—what care I!" said the other. "Find a goblet for thyself, and mayhap thou shalt have good store of jewelry in it."

"Thy greediness is properly punished—for see! here be something worth more than all thy paltry rings." And, as he opened a jewel case, he exhibited a costly necklace of pearls set in fine gold.

"I had mine eyes on that ere thou didst lay a finger on't," said Tony, exceeding vexed that he had missed so fair a prize.

"Tush! what care I?" replied Jack, in the very words his associate had used a moment since.

"Wilt let me have no share in't?" asked the first, staring on the jewel and then on the thief with eyes of devilish covetousness and malice.

"Share in't!" exclaimed the other with a scornful laugh. "Not so much as would buy thee a rope to hang thyself with."

"Then take that!" cried Tony, thrusting his dagger at him.

"What!—wouldst stab, villain?" shouted Jack, starting up in a monstrous rage on finding himself wounded. "Then here's at thee."

"And that—and that!" continued his companion, repeating his blows which the other tried to ward off.

"Murderous devil—I had thee there!" exclaimed the other, as he succeeded in digging his weapon into his opponent's shoulder; and thereupon commenced the most sanguinary fight that ever was seen; for the two villains, smarting with pain and rage, and driven on by extreme thirst for gain, did follow each other round and about the room, cutting furiously one at the other's flesh, with abundance of curses and execrations—their looks all the while being more resembling those of fiends than of anything human, and their bodies streaming with gore from their different wounds. Gregory Vellum, half dead with fright, stared upon the spectacle with eyes ready to start from his head; his teeth chattered as if there was no keeping them quiet; and at every blow that was struck he gave a wince as if the weapon entered his own flesh. They passed him close several times, and one striking furiously at the other upon the moment, some blood did spirt over his face, at the which he seemed ready to give up the ghost, he uttered so pitiful a scream. This might have brought on him more dreadful punishment from the two robbers; yet were they so fired by their mutual hatred one of the other, and each so eager to destroy his associate, that neither did take of him the slightest notice.

All on a sudden, having dropped their daggers, they had got locked in each other's clutch, pulling here and pulling there, tearing at each other's hair, and giving blows with all their strength, when tumbling over something, both came to the ground together and began rolling over and over, swearing horribly, and striving to bite at each other's faces. Surely never were two such incarnate demons seen. There appeared to be nothing human of them, and the mutual deadliness of their hatred was terrible to look upon.

"To hell with thee for a monstrous murderous villain as thou art!" cried Jack, who having recovered his weapon as he passed over it, had plunged it into Tony's breast as he lay upon him. The other raised his head as if with one last effort, and fixed his teeth in the cheek of his murderer.

"Ah!" screamed he in agony, letting his head fall with that of his companion. "Unclose thy villanous teeth!" Jack then stabbed the other several times whilst writhing above him with the pain, expecting to get free thereby; but he was in the gripe of the dead, and all his cutting and screaming availed him none at all. The torture he endured must have been fearful, for the perspiration run down over his face in a thick shower, as he sometimes was cursing dreadfully, sometimes making very pitiful moanings. At last, as if unable to bear it any longer, he thrust his dagger into the dead man's mouth, unlocked his jaws, and freed his own lacerated face.

"A murrain on thee, thou pestilent villain!" exclaimed the survivor, casting wrathful glances at his fallen comrade, "if thou hadst any life in thy treacherous body, I would hack thee into shreds for having so spoilt my face: but I have mauled thee beyond all hope, that's one comfort. 'Slife—how I do bleed!" he added, as he looked to his hurts, which were by no means slight or few, and did attempt to bandage them. "This dig in my side, methinks, hath an ugly look. Alack, what a thrice-cursed knave hast thou been, Tony! and a fool to boot. Not content with thine own gettings,

thou didst covet mine; and now I have all."

"Oh!" groaned the old miser.

"What! dost attempt to give the alarm?" cried out the robber. "Nay, then will I settle thee at once." He rose with his dagger in his hand, as if to put his threat into execution, but his foot slipped in the blood that had dabbled the boards, and in falling he burst the bandage he had tied over his wound in the side, which began to bleed afresh. At this he renewed his execrations, and again essayed to stop the hemorrhage; but he seemed to be getting weaker rapidly, his hands were exceeding unsteady, and his eyes appeared to swim in their sockets. "Oh, I be deadly sick!" he exclaimed in a faint voice, as he supported himself on one hand, sitting on the floor; thereat his head drooped on his shoulder, his arm gave way from under him; and he fell smack upon his back with a loud groan.

Gregory Vellum had watched the struggles of the surviving villain with mingled horror and fright—for a more ghastly object never presented itself to the eye—his face being so dreadfully disfigured and covered with dust and gore, from amid which the ferocious expression of his eyes glared upon the trembling scrivener, whenever he turned in that direction, in a manner so terrible, that it made him feel as if his heart was bursting in twain. Seeing him fall and lie motionless, he did think he was dead, the thought whereof gave him inexpressible comfort; but not liking the idea of being kept bound close to two dead men, he presently began to scream at the very top of his voice, hoping that some of the neighbors would come to his assistance. He had scarce done this, when the robber who had swooned raised himself, and fixed upon the miser a look so threatening and ghastly, that he presently drew in his breath, as if his last hour had come; but he could in no manner draw away his gaze from the villain's horrible stare, and there he sat staring at him, with his teeth knocking against each other, and every limb a trembling like unto one in a mortal agony.

Presently he heard some sort of a noise below stairs, at the which he gave a sudden gasp; but the terrible eyes of the dying robber did then glare upon him so ghostlike, that he dared not make a sound, and felt that he could not if he dared.

"Uncle! uncle! where are you?" he heard cried out to him, and though he recognised the voice of his nephew, whom a short time since he would not have cared to see hanged, it now seemed to him the voice of an angel from heaven; and he was about to reply, when the robber crawled a bit nearer, with his dreadful dagger in his hand, the sight whereof put him into so monstrous a sweat that he felt himself drenched all over. Still the dying villain crawled slowly toward him, dragging his wounded body along by his hands; and though at the same time Gregory heard his nephew's foot upon the stair, the villain was so nigh upon him, having got his hand upon the bottom rail of his chair to raise himself up, with his disfigured face, and terrible eyes seemingly possessed of a thousand new horrors, upon a level with his knees, that knocked against each other most deplorably, he did give himself up for lost; and when he found the ghastly countenance close to his own face, and the fearful weapon uplifted over his breast, his heart sunk within him, and he swooned outright.

Master Francis, coming to visit his kinsman, to see if he could gain of him any intelligence of his father, and finding the door ajar, and seeing that his kinsman was not below stairs, he did call out; but receiving no answer, mounted to a room he knew of old he was oft to be found when wanted. At opening the door, a sight presented itself to him, the like of which, surely, he had never seen. There was the room as unsightly as a shamble, and strewed all about with coin, jewels, plate, and most precious things, which the robbers, in their scuffle, had rolled over and over, and knocked in all directions—one man lay dead, and another—the frightfulest object his eye ever lighted on—supporting himself on the chair with one arm, had the other raised clasping a blood-stained dagger, which was descending in the direction of the heart of his kinsman, who already looked more dead than alive. At the robber he made a rush upon the instant, and caught him by the back of his jerkin at the scuff of the neck, in the very nick of time to save the old miser's life; and dragged him from the chair a distance of some yards, and flung him heavily on the boards. The dying villain did glare on Master Francis with a look so terrible that he could never forget it—the weapon fell from his hand—he gave one mighty shiver in all his limbs, then was there a hollow rattling in his throat, which lasted but a few seconds; and then he lay as dead as any stone.

The youth, in a monstrous marvel at the whole scene, more especially at seeing such a store of precious things lying scattered about as if of no sort of value, did presently cut with his own dagger, the cords that bound his kinsman, thinking at first, that he was as dead as the others—but in some minutes, after calling to him a bit, the old man opened his eyes very fearfully, and with a great wildness; but, they lighting upon his nephew, who, very concernedly, was assuring him of his safety, he did grow more composed; and, upon looking about and seeing of his treasures so scattered, he started up with a suddenness that nearly upset Master Francis, and, as if ailing nothing, he began to gather up his riches.

"Oh, these devilish villains!" exclaimed he to the wondering youth. "They did break in upon me—having got entrance I know not how, and, after binding and threatening of me, proceeded to rifle me of these valuables; which an honest friend hath left in my custody—for thou knowest they can not be mine, seeing I be so exceeding poor; and then falling out upon their division, did straightway go to murdering of each other. When one had killed his companion, the survivor though sorely wounded himself, like a murderous villain as he was, made toward me with his dagger to kill me, the which thou didst luckily prevent by thy coming in. But they have given me a most mortal fright."

"Indeed you have had a narrow escape, uncle," observed Master Francis.

"Ay, have I," replied the old miser, very carefully wiping of everything that had got in any way stained. "And I give God thanks for it—more especially for the saving of the honest man's goods; who, had he suffered aught, might, peradventure, have wanted me to make up his loss; the which thou knowest I could never do, being in so poor a state that I can scarce get enough to live by. But take heed that you give no hint I have these things in my custody, else the report thereof may bring other murderous thieves upon me, and not only shall I be like to be robbed of my life, but all this goodly store I may be despoiled of, as I was but now like to be; which doubtless would be the utter ruin of the honest man who hath placed them in my keeping."

"Be assured I shall say nothing," replied the youth. "But shall I not assist you in gathering them up?"

"Nay, touch them not, I prythee!" quickly cried out Gregory Vellum in great alarm, and casting a suspicious glance at his nephew, as if doubtful of the honesty of his intentions. "I will look to them myself."

"Well let it be as you like, uncle," said Master Francis, in no way offended, for he had much experience of his kinsman's suspicious temper; besides, he wanted not to anger him, by taking offence at aught he might do, as he had an object to gain thereby, the obtaining of which, was to him of the greatest interest.

"But where hast thou been all this time?" inquired his uncle after a short silence—still employing himself diligently in wiping the plate and jewels, and replacing them in the chest. "Thou didst leave me of a sudden, without why or wherefore."

"Methought 'twas time to do something for myself," answered the youth, "and not any longer to be a burthen to you, who seemed to lack either the will or the means to make my life of any comfort"—

"The means, Francis—the means," said the old man, quickly interrupting him. "'Twas the means I lacked. Indeed, I be exceeding poor."

"By the recommendation of a true friend, I did accidently as it were, encounter," continued his nephew, "I succeeded in getting the respectable office of secretary to one of our chiefest men at court."

"Truly thou seemest in very fine feather," remarked Gregory Vellum, somewhat sarcastically, as he turned to notice the handsome apparelling of his youthful relative; "I warrant me thou wilt spend on thy back all thou earnest. Well, I care not, so that thou comest not back on my hands."

"But I came to beg a favor of you, uncle," said Master Francis.

"Nay, ask of me nothing," hastily replied the old miser, as he left off counting the gold pieces into the old stocking; "I have scarce wherewith to live; I can not let thee have a groat. Thou hast taken thyself off, and must fare as thou canst; so come not a begging, for it be of no manner of use, I be so exceeding poor, as thou knowest."

"I want not money of you," observed the youth; "I have enough for my wants, and my patron doth not let me lack aught his power or purse can procure. I seek of you only that you truly tell me who was my father."

"What dost come a worrying me of thy father?" asked the scrivener, with a disturbed countenance, as he quickly caught hold of some parchments that were nigh unto him, and placed them at once in the chest. "I know naught of him that be worth the knowing; he was some paltry fellow or other—a very mean person."

"Was he married to my mother?" inquired his nephew, more earnestly.

"Prythee question me not," replied the old man, seemingly taking it very uneasily. "It matters not at all; I can not be answering of thy unprofitable queries. It be of no consequence whether he had her in marriage or otherwise, for he was a monstrous paltry fellow at all events."

"Indeed, it be of vital consequence to me," cried the youth, in an increasing agitation; "I pray you, uncle, tell me the truth."

"Well, then, if thou wilt have it, I will tell thee," answered the scrivener—"I have kept it from the world, and given out otherwise, for the sake of my sister's reputation; but I can tell thee of a certainty that thou art illegitimate."

"Ah! I feared 'twere so," exclaimed Master Francis, as the color mounted to his cheek, and he hid his face in his hands, for very shame. The which seeing, Gregory Vellum regarded only with a sort of smile, that made his leaden physiognomy not a whit more pleasant than ordinary, and continued the counting of his money.

"Was he one Holdfast, and did he live in noted bad character?" asked the other, suddenly, as if with a kind of desperation.

"Ay, very like—very like," replied the old man. "If I remember me, his name was Holdfast, or something exceeding near it; and that he was a notorious villain is out of all question."

"Then I know the worst," said he, calmly, but with a great paleness of face, "and I will now take my leave of you."

"Stop awhile!" bawled out the miser, hastily coming up to his nephew as he was approaching the door. The latter, on this, did stay his steps.

"Hast taken nothing while I was in the swoon?" he asked, gazing on the other with a monstrous suspicious countenance.

"Nay, this is too bad," said Master Francis, in no mood to be so spoken to, and moving off.

"But thou shalt not go till I have searched thee," sharply added Gregory Vellum, as he laid hold of him to make him stay. "I am sure, by thy wanting to be gone with such speed, that thou hast stolen something."

"Away! you are past bearing!" cried the youth, as he pushed him back, and walked out of the room.

"Francis! Francis!" the old miser bawled out as his nephew closed the door upon him. "Prythee leave me not alone with these dead men! I will not search thee—I do not think thou hast robbed me of anything. Nay, go not away till the house be rid of these corpses! Francis! Francis, I say!"—and he came down the stairs after him in great alarm.

The unhappy youth by this time was into the street, pacing along with a most woful heart. Indeed he had much to trouble him. He knew that his patron, Sir Walter Raleigh, whom he had begun to love exceedingly, was a prisoner in the Tower; when he could get out, no man could say. All that he had dreaded to learn of his parentage seemed now put beyond the possibility of question; at the which he felt so cast down as scarce to know what he was a doing; and the late behavior of his miserly kinsman, though nothing more than he might expect of his disposition, in the humor in which he was, did irritate him all the more. After passing along a little way in extreme despondency of mind, he bethought him of visiting his beloved Joanna, whose reception of him, he doubted not, would presently relieve him of his miserable feelings; yet when he came to think of the tone of her letters not coming up to his expectations, in the peculiar mood in which he then was, he straight began to have suspicions that she regarded him less than he would have her; but in a few minutes there came to his recollection numberless kindnesses she had done him, which to him were as positive proofs of the sincerity of her affection. The remembrance of these things did assure him somewhat, and became to him of such great comfort, that for the time it clean drove all unpleasant thoughts out of his head.

At this moment there came on a very smart shower of rain, and he, wishing to save his new doublet a wetting, hastened for shelter under a gateway close at hand. Passing beneath here, he spied an open door at one side, for which he made, but presently desisted of his purpose on hearing voices that of a certainty came from

it. He was about to content himself with the shelter of the gateway as far as might be from the door, when he recognised the voice of Joanna, that did at once fix him to the spot.

"Nay, nay, my lord," said she, "it may please you to affirm this, but I doubt you affect me so much as you say."

"O' my life, adorable Joanna!" answered one very urgently, whom Master Francis instantly knew, by the manner of speaking, to be my Lord Cobham, whom he had often heard. "I swear to you I do love you exceedingly. In truth, your infinite loveliness is of such a sort, that never expect I to find aught so worthy of the steadfast and most perfect devotedness with which I do regard you."

Speech like this, it may be believed, Master Francis liked not at all.

"Methinks you are but trifling with me," observed the other.

"Nay, my heart's treasure! believe me, I never was in such earnest!" replied her companion. "Take this ring—'tis a ruby of great price; yet should it be inestimable to come up with my estimation of your worthiness, exquisitely beautiful Joanna! Here, let me place it on your most delicate finger."

At this Master Francis began to be much troubled that she, whom he so loved, should accept gifts from one who, to his knowledge, was noted for his gallantries.

"I scarce think it be right of me to take your gift, my lord," said Joanna. "Yet to refuse it might seem discourteous of me, so I will e'en accept of it."

"And grant of me in return but one precious favor," added the Lord Cobham in an entreating voice, that did much increase the disturbance of Master Francis. "It be but to press that tempting lip, compared with which, the ruby must seem but pale."

"Indeed, that I can never do," replied she.—"Nay, hold me not so closely, my lord, I entreat of you."

This put Master Francis in a perfect tremble, and he suddenly felt the blood a rushing to his cheek—yet was he like one chained to the spot; for though he felt desperately inclined to disturb them, he was so affected by the unexpectedness of what he had heard, that he had not the power of moving.

"Turn not away that exquisite countenance, admirable Joanna!" exclaimed the Lord Cobham, while a rustling was heard as if he was a struggling with her, which did increase Master Francis's disorder mightily: "and strive not to move from arms so eager to hold so perfect a creature in their fond embrace. In good truth, I *must*, sweetest."

"Have done, my lord, I pray you! You hurt me, indeed, you do. Nay, some one will be a coming! How you tease! Well, if you will, it must needs be," was all that Joanna said in reply; and Master Francis, thinking from what she spoke, that she liked not my Lord Cobham's advances, with one desperate effort was about to break in upon him, when he heard the consent given, and immediately followed by the close smacking of lips, which moved him so against her, that he rushed from the gateway on the instant.

CHAPTER XIV.

I can not hold; good rascal, let me kiss thee:
I never knew thee in so rare a humor.
BEN JONSON.

A part to tear a cat in—to make all split.
SHAKSPEARE.

Sir Toby. Come thy ways, Signior Fabian!
Fabian. Nay, I'll come. If I lose a scruple of this sport let me be boiled to death with melancholy.—IBID.

We hope to make the circle of your eyes
Flow with distilled laughter. BEN JONSON.

Now must I transport the courteous reader, who hath followed me along hitherto with admirable patience, and I hope with some pleasure, into the shop of a noted barber-chirurgeon, alluded to in the preceding pages, as living over against the jolly mercer's in Eastcheap. He was called Martin Lather and sometimes Master Lather by those who would seem to hold him in some respect; and he had for an apprentice one Harry Daring—a sturdy boy of some fifteen years or so; of both of whom more anon. First to describe the shop, which was of no little repute among the citizens. On a projecting window there were divers notices to acquaint the passengers of what Master Lather was skilled in: some of these were in rhyme, for he did pride himself mightily on his scholarship. As for instance—

"Shaving done here
By the day, month, or year."

Or in another case—

"Beards trimmed neatly;
And teeth extracted completely."

And mayhap close upon it would be found—

"I breathe a vein
For a little gain;

And on moderate terms
I cure the worms."

While in another place the gazer should meet—

"Hair cut and curled
As well as anywhere in the world;
And in bald places made to grow,
Whether it will or no."

About there were some few shelves, having on them bundles of herbs, jars of ointment, and the like—(very famous in the cure of many disorders); and elsewhere in the shop were some drawers, shelves with gallipots, and bottles containing different colored liquors, and some with powders in them. A lot of ballads and broad sheets were against the wainscot. Over the fireplace was framed a large writing, having for the title, very conspicuous, "Forfeits," which ran thus—

"He that must needs be served out of his turn,
Shall pay a penny, and better manners learn.
He that the master would stay in his calling,
Or dispute in such terms as will lead to a brawling,
Or meddle with what he hath had no occasion,
He shall pay two-pence to his great vexation.
He that doth swear, or doth say any scandal,
Or prate of such things as be not fit to handle,
Or from the ballads shall tear or take any,
Straightway from his pouch there must come forth a penny.
And he that shall seek for to play any tricks,
With the pricking of pins, or the poking of sticks;
Or chalk on a doublet—or foul any hat,
Without doubt shall he forfeit a penny for that.
Likewise if against the queen's grace say he aught,
He shall, as 'tis fitting, be made pay a groat,
And ask pardon all round—the which to his pain
Will keep him from talking such treason again."

A large black cat was cleaning of its skin upon a three-legged stool, nigh unto a table standing by the side of the fireplace, on which were sundry combs, brushes, scissors, vials, a pestle and mortar, and instruments for the pulling out of teeth; and a little closer to the light, there sat in a huge high-backed chair, an exceeding serious-looking old man, rather short of stature, with some few gray hairs on his head, and a small peaked beard of the like sort; wearing on his nose, which was of the longest and of an excellent fine point, a pair of famous large spectacles, through which he was gazing upon what he was about. He was trimly dressed, with everything formal and grave about him. In one hand he held a lancet, and in the other a cabbage-leaf. A boy stood before him seemingly very attentive. He was thickset and short of his age, with an honest plump face, and eyes that looked as if ever intent upon some mischief or another. In truth, it was a countenance that was not easy to be described, saving that it was a very dare-devil—care-for-naught—full-of-tricks sort of face as ever boy had. He had on a leather jerkin and breeches of the same, partly covered with an apron of linen, that looked as if he had been rolling on the floor in it—which was like enough. He wore yellow hose, and thick shoes of leather. These two were Master Lather, the barber-chirurgeon, and his apprentice Harry Daring.

"Methinks you know pretty well by this time how to dress hair," observed the barber to his pupil with a monstrous grave countenance, "seeing that you have been curling of the old mop for some time past: the which be an admirable way for the learning of that part of our craft—for if you singe it, then shall no man rate you for the burning of his pate: which maketh good the saying of Aristotle, 'Ante illum imperatorem!' which meaneth, 'hurt no one and he shall not cry out.'"

"I promise you," replied the boy, seeming as if regarding his master with great attention, "without doubt I be as clever at it as any 'prentice in the city; and upon the strength of my skilfulness at the mop, I did essay to frizzle up the locks of Gammer Griskin, who wanted them done in a hurry when you were from home, at the which I succeeded marvellously."

"I remember me well," said the old man, increasing in the gravity of his features, "when next I dressed the old woman I found one half of her hair scorched to a cinder, and inquiring of her what she had done to her head, did hear that you had been practising on it—whereupon I said nothing—remembering what is written in Epicurus, 'Nihil reliqui fecit,' the which translated is, 'hold thy tongue, and thy prating shall do thee no harm.' However, you are at least well skilled in the practice of shaving, seeing that you have put the razor over the scalded pig's head pretty often, and with a proper degree of cunning."

"Ay, master, that have I," answered the apprentice quickly. "Indeed, I have tried my skilfulness on others besides the chaps of dead pigs; for be it known to you, Gaffer Gravestone coming one morning before you were up, with a beard of a week's growth, to get rid of which he was in too great a hurry to wait your coming down, I took upon me to lather and shave him to a nicety."

"True," observed the barber-chirurgeon with additional solemnity, "the sexton did complain to me, with a face covered with plasters, that as well as slicing of a piece off his chin as big as a

rose noble, and gashing of his cheek in three several places, you had completely cut off from beside his ear two moles of no ordinary size, that there had grown undisturbed and respected for a matter of forty years. But with some ado I managed to pacify him, upon promising that his face should look all the younger for it, and doing his cure free of expense; having in my mind at the time the words of that famous writer Averroes, 'Tenuit hoc propositum,' that should be thus rendered in the vulgar, 'make amends if any have suffered by thee, but if it be not in thy power attempt it not, for thou canst never succeed in the doing of that which is impossible.'"

"Well, seeing that you have sufficient insight for the nonce into these matters," continued the old barber very seriously, "methought 'twas fitting time you should be taught the more noble part of our excellent and profitable profession; so attend, and I will initiate you into the whole art and mystery of the breathing of a vein. See you this cabbage-leaf?"

"I'faith, master, that I can not fail of doing, it being right under my nose," replied the boy.

"Now, mark the different ridges in the leaf," said Master Lather, pointing to them for his inspection. "It hath been written in Galen, 'In suam tutelam pervenissent,'—which meaneth—'man be exceeding like unto a cabbage-leaf.' And the similarity is manifest—for there be veins in the leaf, and there be veins in man also. Now, in the breathing of a vein it requireth some dexterity; for, mayhap, you may chance to miss it; then shall it not bleed of a surety. Taking this ridge for the vein—having, first of all, tied a bandage of broad tape, at a penny a yard, above the bend of the arm, here you see"—and then he bared his arm to show. "You must hold down the vein with the thumb of your left hand, that it may not slip; then, in your right holding your lancet betwixt the thumb and finger, as I do, you will send down the point into the vein, making a moderate orifice by jerking it up thus;" and thereupon he did penetrate the ridge of the leaf, whilst the boy was a looking on with exceeding curiousness.

"The reason you should first essay in a cabbage-leaf is this," continued the chirurgeon: "that whereas, on a first trial or so, upon the arm of a living man, not having the necessary experience, you may chance to cut deep and draw no blood, whereat he may be in a monstrous passion; but though you draw no blood from the cabbage-leaf upon cutting ever so, there shall be no falling out betwixt you and it: for truly it is said by Esculapius, 'Dulce est pro patriâ mori;' the which doth mean—'things that have no voice can give no abuse.' Observe you how it can be done, and then make trial yourself."

"I warrant you I can do it famously," cried Harry Daring, taking the lancet into his own hand, and digging into the cabbage-leaf after the manner of his master.

"Villain! you have cut my finger!" bawled out Master Lather, dropping the leaf, and looking very dismal at his finger, which began a bleeding somewhat.

"O' my life, I knew not your hand was so nigh!" said the boy with an exceeding demure face, though it be hugely suspected the young dog did it on purpose.

"A murrain on you, I doubt you will ever make a chirurgeon, you be so awkward," added his master, as he tied up his wound—which, luckily, was no great matter.

"Nay, master, look if I be not marvellous skilful already!" exclaimed the apprentice, now holding the cabbage-leaf himself, and digging at it in a very furious fashion.

"Not so fast! not so fast, I pray you!" cried the old man. "Put you down the point a little inward, and make a sweep with it up. Let it not go in so deep. Nay, do it not as if you were digging a salad! Alack! that will never do! In truth, if you were serving a man's arm thus, he would cry out against you, and have reason for't: for is it not written in Galen, 'Rara avis in terris, nigroque simillima cygno;' which, done into English, is—'take heed you do no man any hurt, else marvel not he come to you for a plaster." There, that is better—now put it down. Mayhap I will give you another lesson on the cabbage-leaf to-morrow, for indeed, you must in no way attempt to breathe a vein till you have thus learnt of me the way many times. Now, perchance you shall not have forgot that we had part of a calf's head for dinner?"

"No, i'faith, not I, master," replied the other, instantly, a smacking of his lips, "seeing that I did pick the bones so superlatively clean, that puss hath looked daggers at me ever since."

"Well—get you into the kitchen and fetch me the jaw—for I have need of it."

"Marry, what wants he with it, I wonder?" muttered the boy to himself, as he went quickly on his errand. "Methinks he hath quite jaw enough as it is. And hath he not a calf's head of his own, too? Well, some folks be never satisfied!" On his return he found Master Lather with an instrument in his hand for the extracting of teeth.

"Now will I give you a lesson on another branch of our honorable profession," said the barber-chirurgeon, taking the bone into his hand, and handling his instrument so as to show the way of fixing it on the tooth. "When one comes to you with a raging tooth, it be best to take it out straight, for thereby shall you ease him of his toothache, and be at least a groat the richer for your pains. Now, there be two kinds of teeth, as it be writ in Aristotle, 'malus puer,' an 'easy tooth;' and 'bonus puer,' an 'obstinate tooth;' that is to say, one that will out with a small tug, and one that you may try ever so at, and it shall stick as firm as ever. Now, suppose you that this be the jaw of one that hath come to you to do your office on him for the riddance of his pain—for of a sure thing it be better at first to practise on such a thing as this than meddle with a living mouth; which remindeth me of what hath been said on this very subject by the learned Podalirius: 'De gustibus non est disputandum:' which, rightly translated, reads thus—'Touch but the tail of a living dog and he shall snap at you presently; but you may hawl a dead lion by the ear and he shall take it exceeding civil of you.' If the tooth be a back tooth, and in the under jaw (getting your patient to sit quiet and say nothing), you shall presently put your instrument into his mouth and fix the claw on the further side of the tooth, thus—holding it down firm with the finger of the other hand; then shall you give it a wrench, and, doubtless, it will come out, as you see."

"That be bravely done, master, sure enough!" exclaimed Harry Daring, who had watched the whole operation with an abundance of curiosity. "And methinks I can do it now."

"Be not too hasty, boy," replied his master. "See me do it some two or three times more, then shall you take the instrument and try for yourself." At this the old man went over the same process once or twice, with much the same directions as at first; to the which his apprentice did seem to direct an earnest attention, then gave he the instrument into the boy's hands, and held the jaw for him to pull at.

"Now, supposing one came to you with a raging tooth, how would you set about the extracting of it?" asked Master Lather, with a famous serious countenance.

"Why, I would do in this sort," answered the other, setting briskly about the operation. "I would make him open his jaw straight, and fixing the instrument in a presently, I would give him a twist thus."

"Oh! you're pinching my thumb!" screamed the old man, stamping with the pain; and then releasing of it from the instrument in monstrous quick time, he sat twisting himself about—a shaking of his hurt hand, and making of such faces as were a marvel to look upon. "What an absolute awkward varlet are you! Oh, my thumb! my thumb! the flesh is squeezed to the very bone. Never was master plagued with such a clumsy apprentice. Oh, my thumb—it doth pain me piteously!"

"I knew not it was so nigh," said the boy with as grave a face as he could, though, from the twinkle in the rogue's eye, it was manifest he had perfect knowledge of the matter. Then he set to pulling out of the remaining teeth as if he was a doing of it for a wager. "But see, master, how bravely I can manage it."

"Nay I will give you no more lessons for the present—I have had enough of you!" exclaimed his master, taking his hat from a pin against the wainscot, and his stick out of the corner. "I am going to Master Tickletoby the schoolmaster," he continued, putting on his hat, and making for the door. "Send for me, if I be wanted. Oh, my thumb! my thumb."

"Ha!" cried Harry Daring, as soon as the old man had disappeared. "Doubtless thou art for the picking up of some more Latin which old Tickletoby—a murrain on him for having given me the birch so oft!—doth get out of his schoolbooks; and which, as Master Francis hath assured me, thou dost misapply most abominably; and he says thy translations be as much like the original as is a Barbary hen to a dish of stewed prunes. But I care not, so that there be fun in the world, and plenty of it."

Then finding he had taken out all the teeth from the jaw, he flung it aside, and looked as if he scarce knew what to be at.

"By Gog and Magog!" exclaimed he, chafing of his hands merrily. "If there should come one with a raging tooth now, I would be at it without fail, for it seemeth to me exquisite sport. Indeed, 'tis a thousand pities there be no living jaw to have a twist at; what, puss! puss! hast got never a raging tooth in thy head, puss? Come, none of thy nonsense!" he added, seeing that the cat, who knew him and his tricks of old, thinking that he meant her no good, after a pitiful mew, was making off to be out of his way. But he soon had hold of her; lifting her by the scuff of her neck, he carried her to the three-legged stool, on which he sat himself down, and placed her upon her back in his lap; where she lay quiet, as if scarce daring to move, and only now and then noticing what he was a doing of by a mew so exceeding piteous, that few could resist it: yet he minded it not a whit.

"So thou hast not forgot how I singed off thy whiskers, seeking to give them a right fashionable curl," said the boy very seriously, as he took in his hand the tooth instrument, and seemed intent on getting it into the cat's mouth. "I know thou hast got a villanous toothache by the look of thee, and mayhap, I will do thee such excellent service as to take it out. Ay, and charge thee nothing for't; inasmuch as thou hast nothing to pay, and be hanged to thee! else shouldst thou pay a groat, like any other Christian. And I will talk Latin to thee, puss, and though I made nothing of it at school, at least shall it be as famous Latin as my master's, and thou shalt understand it as well, I'll be bound. For is it not writ in Aristotle, that there be two kinds of teeth —as 'hocus pocus,' 'an easy tooth'— 'presto prestissimus,' an 'obstinate tooth.' So open thy mouth, puss, and quickly. Nay, if thou dost but attempt to scratch, I'll give thee such a clout of the head as shall put all thy nine lives in jeopardy. I do assure thee, puss, 'tis all for thy good, so there be no need of setting up so piteous a mewing;—which remindeth me of what hath been said on this subject by the learned Podalirius, 'fol de riddle ido, lillibullero, wriggledumfunnibus,' which, rightly translated, reads thus—'he can bear very little pain who crieth out before he be hurt.' Ha!—thou understandest Latin, I see, by the very wagging of thy tail. So, prythee, open thy mouth at once, there's a good puss, for I must give thy jaw a twist for the fun of the thing. What, thou wilt not, ey? O' my life, I'll shave thy tail as bare as my hand, and make thee ashamed to show thyself before thy sweetheart,—for truly it is said by Esculapius, 'hoppeti kickoti corum hic hæc hoc cum tickle me,' the which doth mean, 'that a cat with a shaved tail be by no means comely to look upon.'"

Here he was interrupted by an old woman with her jaw tied up, entering at the door; at the sight of which, he let down the cat very quickly, and with an exceeding innocent face, advanced up to her.

"Where be Master Lather?" cried the dame in right piteous accents, as with a shrewish countenance of exceeding uneasiness, she sat herself down on a chair, swaying backward and forward, and making such a moaning as was quite moving to hear.

"He be out, good dame, and will tarry long, doubtless, seeing that he be gone to set a marvellous bad dislocation," replied Harry Daring, with a look as grave as that of his master. "But, if I can do you any service, believe me, I shall be infinitely glad on't."

"Oh, I have the cursedest tooth that ever plagued a miserable old woman!" said she, rocking herself to and fro, and moaning worse than ever.

"In the extracting of teeth lieth my particular skilfulness," added the boy, "for in that have I had such practice as would astonish you mightily to hear. Indeed I am so cunning at it that master leaveth all the tooth-drawing to me, saying to the customers, that there be not so apt an apprentice in the whole city. Nay, I do assure you, take it as you list, I have arrived at such perfection in the art, that I could take out every tooth in your head and you shall know it not; which remindeth me of what hath been said on this subject by the learned Podalirius: 'fol de riddle ido, lillebullero, wriggledumfunnibus,' which, rightly translated, reads thus—'he that can draw a tooth without pain, must needs be in famous request of those troubled with an aching jaw.'"

"Well, if you can talk Latin at your years, you must needs be exceeding clever," remarked the old woman, "so I will let you take out my tooth, and here's a groat for you, if you promise to give me no pain in it."

"I will whip it out and you shall know naught of the matter," answered the apprentice, readily taking the money, well pleased at having so fine an opportunity

for showing off his skill. "Which be it, good dame?" inquired he, after he had got her to sit in the chair, and stood before her, looking gravely into her mouth, with the instrument in his hand.

"It be the last but two on the left side, in the under jaw," replied she. "But hurt me not, I pray you."

"Be assured I will hurt you none, if you attend to my directions," said the boy. "So, hold fast by the arms of the chair, else you must needs feel the pain."

"Ah!" screamed the old woman, seemingly at the very top of her voice, as she lifted up her hands to her jaw immediately he gave a wrench.

"There, now!" cried Harry Daring, looking monstrously displeased. "Did I not say you would feel pain if you held not fast to the chair? For is it not writ in Aristotle that there are two kinds of teeth, as 'harem scarem,' an 'easy tooth,' 'crinkum crankum,' an 'obstinate tooth;' and the latter kind have you, without a doubt,"

"Well, well, I will be as quiet as I may," said she, putting down her hands, but looking wofully frightened. "Yet 'twas a most awful pain. Now hurt not again, good youth, I pray you."

"Believe me I would not hurt a hair of your head, for any money," replied the apprentice, with a very touching earnestness; "but hold fast,—I can promise nothing if you let go the chair."

"Oh!" shrieked the dame, louder and longer than at first; and caught hold of his hands as he was a tugging with all his might.

"A murrain on you," exclaimed the boy, stamping as if in a great rage, "did ever any one see the like? I was having it out as easily as is the drawing of a cork from a bottle of Ippocras, and without pain enough to hurt a fly, when you let go the chair, and made the pain come on the instant. 'Slife, it be enough to put a saint in a passion; for truly is it said by Esculapius, 'Syrupus croci scrupulum dimidium, aquæ puræ quantum sufficit:' the which doth mean,—'she that will let go when she be told to hold fast, deserveth all she may get for her paine.'"

"If it was not for the Latin, I should doubt you were so skilled as you have said," remarked his patient, very dolefully; "but the Latin be a wonderful comfort. You shall have at it once more, and for the last time; for in truth I can endure no such horrible pain as the last."

"Hold fast, then; and now or never," cried the young barber, as he put his whole might and main into one desperate tug.

"Oh! oh! murder! Oh! Lord ha' mercy on my sins! Oh! murder! murder! murder!" screamed the old woman, with all the strength of her lungs, as she tried to hold his hands; but this time he knit his brows fiercely, and twisted at the instrument as if for his life; and in spite of the struggles and shriekings of his patient, he desisted not till he wrenched the tooth right out upon the floor.

"Here it be, dame," exclaimed he, joyfully, as soon as he saw it fall, "and o' my life 'tis a famous one." But the other seemed to think that her jaw had been torn out; for with her hands up to her face, she sat a writhing and twisting her body about the room, as if she was in her last agony.

"Oh! I be a dying! my hour be come; I must needs give up the ghost," cried she, very piteously.

"Keep a good heart—you will be well enough soon," replied he, as he was a wiping of his instrument.

"Indeed, 'twas a most awful scraunch," added his patient, looking in most deplorable fashion; "methought my head was a going clean off, and you was a pulling of it up by the roots:—but where be the tooth?"

"There, dame," he answered, pointing to where it lay; at the which she hastened to pick it up.

"Oh! you murderous villain!" shouted out the old woman, her face all of a sudden becoming livid with rage, as she looked upon the tooth: "you have pulled out the only two sound teeth I had in my head, and left the aching one in."

"What, have I pulled out *two?*" exclaimed the boy, as if mightily pleased; "why, what excellent luck have I! But you must needs pay me the other groat, seeing that you bargained only for one."

"I pay thee a groat, caitiff!" cried she, in a worse rage than ever, "I'll see thee hanged first!—And two such fine teeth, too, that would have lasted me a good score years. Oh! 'tis not to be borne."

"Why, thou shalt have all the less toothaches for it," said the apprentice, in a wonderful consoling voice; "I warrant they shall never ache; for is it not writ in Aristotle"—

"Drat Harry's total and thee too!" screamed the other, looking as fiercely as if she was about to fly at him; "I could tear thee limb from limb, you horrible young villain."

"Nay, thou hadst best be quiet and

take thyself off," observed the boy, seriously; though he took huge delight in seeing her in so towering a passion. "Indeed, if thou showest thy tearing humor to me, I will set the dog on thee, who be famous for worrying of an old witch."

"Dost call me an old witch, thou pestilent little varlet? Me an old witch:—me!"

"'Tis like enough to be true; for 'tis well known thou wert seen last Christmas eve dancing of a measure with the devil's grannum on the top of the moon."

"I dance with the devil's grannum?—I!"

"I have spoke with those who will take their oaths of it: and moreover they do report that thou didst caper after a fashion that was a scandal to look upon."

"Oh! the horrid perjurers! But I do believe thou sayest it of thine own villanous invention:—thou wilt come to the gallows, that be one comfort."

"Away, old witch!"

"I'll live to see thee hanged, thou outrageous litle villain."

"Mount thy broomstick, and be off up the chimney; for thy cousin Beelzebub be waiting for thee, with a goodly bowl of brimstone and treacle for thy supper."

"I tell thee I be an honest woman that have had children, and two of 'em be twins," squeaked out the old woman, now in such a rage she could scarcely speak.

"Ah! I have heard of thy twins," exclaimed the boy in an aggravating tone: "the midwife told her gossip, and her gossip told the neighbors."

"And what said she, thou hangdog?" cried the other, trembling in every limb with the greatness of her passion. "I do defy thee, caitiff; they were as fine twins as ever honest woman had."

"Marvellous fine, truly!" replied he, in the same manner; "for I was told by those who had sight of them, that one of them was a three-legged stool and the other an elephant."

"Oh! thou horrid young monster! thou perjured little villain!"

"Away, broomstick!"

"Thou hangdog! Thou gallows-bird!"

"Out, brimstone!"

"Thou misbegotten imp of mischief! Thou"—

"The devil waiteth supper for thee. Vanish!"

"Agh!" shrieked the enraged old woman, with a violent twist of her head, as if she had exhausted all her spite; and then shaking her skinny fist at Harry Daring, she suddenly flung herself out at the door.

"Ha! ha! ha!" roared the boy, seemingly in a perfect ecstasy. "Well, if this be not the most exquisite fine fun, then know I not what fun is. But methought this drawing of teeth would be good sport; and, if I could only get to bleed a vein now, then should I be content. Ah, puss!—art there still? Well, I must needs have at thee again for lack of another customer. But I want not aught of thy teeth at present: I be only curious to know if thou hast got ever a vein."

The mischievous apprentice soon had the cat in his lap again, and after talking to her in a similar strain as at first, with a liberal supply of his Latin, he tied up one of her forelegs with a piece of tape as if about to let her blood. And doubtless would he have persisted in such intention, for he had the lancet in his hand, and the cat lay as still as if she was too frightened to move, when, upon a noise of opening of the door, he let her down quickly, and putting his hands behind him, that none might see what he had hold on, he turned round to see who it was, with a face as demure and innocent as you please. Then there entered no other than Captain Swagger (of whom the reader hath already some knowledge), marching in with the absolutest blustering manner that ever was seen.

"Fellow, where's thy master?" he exclaimed in a voice of thunder, as, with his tremendous sword clattering against the boards as he went, he flung himself into the great chair, looking at the boy as if he would eat him at a mouthful.

"Please you, my lord," replied Harry Daring very respectfully, and with a countenance that would have become a judge; "he hath gone to wait upon an alderman, if it please your lordship, who be troubled with the windy colics exceeding badly, please you, my lord; but, as he hath marvellous great confidence in me, knowing that I be skilled beyond my years in everything that appertaineth to chirurgery and to the craft of a barber, he is willing enough I should attend his business in his absence, if it please your lordship: therefore, if there be anything you require of my master, if I attempt it you may be well assured it shall lack nothing in the doing, if it please you, my lord."

"Canst let blood, fellow?" inquired the captain, somewhat prepossessed in favor of the apprentice, for that he had taken him for a lord.

"I can let anything, if it please your lordship," said the boy, famously well pleased that such was required of him. "But, indeed, in the letting of blood lieth my particular skilfulness. I can assure you, for a truth, that I have acquired by repeated practice such excellent cunning in the breathing of a vein, that I do it, and lo!—the patient shall not know it be done. And in all honesty I can add, without boasting, that there be divers worshipful members of the common council who will not hear of any other letting them blood, I be held of them in such high consideration: which remindeth me of what hath been said on this subject by the learned Podalirius—'Sanguis draconis granum unum, panis recentis drachmæ duas; misce et divide in pilulas centum,' which rightly translated reads thus, 'He that can breathe a vein in such sort as to be out of comparison with any other, shall assuredly be considered as one beyond all price among those who would be let blood—if it please you, my lord."

"What, canst quote Latin?" asked Captain Swagger, as completely imposed upon as the old woman had been. "Well, take my arm; but see that I be let blood in proper fashion, fellow! or I will cut off thy ears."

"Of that rest you well satisfied," answered the boy, gravely proceeding to bind up the captain's arm, and in no way daunted at his fierce manner; for, in truth, he was of such a spirit that he cared for nothing when he was about any mischief. "And as for the quoting of Latin, if it please your lordship, I began so early at it, and took to it so kindly, that I be now accounted such a dabster there be scarce any book in Latin I can not give you chapter and verse out of."

The young rogue had by this time bared and tied up the patient's arm, and gave him to hold the handle of an old mop to rest it on, and was looking very earnestly for the vein; but the arm was one of the fattest, and nothing of a vein was to be seen. At this he seemed a little puzzled for a moment; but being of a disposition that would stop at no difficulty, he presently put on a famous knowing look, and made up his mind about what he was to do.

"Now, grasp you the mop firm, and turn your head away, if it please you, my lord," said the young chirurgeon, pressing of the thumb of his left hand down nigh unto the bend of the arm, and in the right hand having the lancet very close upon it. The other did as he was desired, but not without looking a little paler than he was awhile since. "I charge you to look not this way till I give the word; then shall I have breathed your vein for you in such delicate fashion as you can have no experience of." At this he made a sudden plunge of the lancet into the flesh, at which the captain winced; but, to the astonishment of the apprentice, no blood flowed.

"Hast done it?—methought I felt the prick," said his patient quickly.

"Nay, 'twas only my thumb-nail, which be rather of the sharpest; and like enough you felt it as I pressed down to feel the vein," replied Harry Daring, in no way put out. "For is it not writ in Aristotle that there be two kinds of veins; as 'hocus pocus,' an 'easy vein'—'presto prestissimus,' an 'obstinate vein': and the latter kind have you, without doubt, for it lieth not easy to be got at, if it please your lordship." Then he made another plunge deeper than at first, at which the captain did wince again; but, to the exceeding puzzlement of the youthful chirurgeon, not a drop of blood did make its appearance.

"Surely thou hast cut me!" exclaimed his patient with some sort of earnestness.

"A murrain on my nail for its sharpness!" cried the boy, still not inclined to relinquish his purpose. "But rest you easy, and turn your head this way on no account, lest something wrong come of it; for truly is it said by Esculapius, 'Hoppeti kicketi corum, hic, hæc, hoc, cum tickle me,' the which doth mean, 'he that looketh when he be told not, mayhap shall spy what he shall not be pleased to see.'" Then he made another plunge deeper than ever, at which the captain cried out lustily.

"By Gog and Magog!" angrily exclaimed the mischievous apprentice, throwing down the lancet upon finding he was not a whit more successful with it than at first; and quickly taking off the bandage—"thou hast no more blood in thee than I could get out of a pickled herring."

It would be impossible properly to describe the rage of Captain Swagger upon turning round and finding a huge gash in his arm, and the vein not a bleeding. His bushy mustaches seemed to curl up with very indignation, and his face, which had got exceeding pale, now was in a monstrous fiery wrath.

"A thousand furies!" shouted he, start-

ing up of a sudden. "Hast dared to cut me in this manner?"

"In truth, I have cut thee to the bone!" said the other, as seriously as you please. "And if thou hast ever a vein in thy arm of other sort than I can find in a cabbage leaf, then know I naught of the matter."

"Slave! hast done this and expect to live? Dost know who I be, fellow?" thundered out the captain, in an increasing passion at the other's coolness.

"Mayhap thou art a brazier, and carriest thy stock in trade in thy countenance, for in truth it be exceeding brazen," replied the boy, in no way daunted at his patient's fierce looks.

"'Sblood! I will crop thy ears for thee on the instant!" bawled Captain Swagger, as he drew forth his tremendous rapier.

"What! dost draw on me?" cried the apprentice, making to the door as if about to run for his life; but he was never in a humor for turning tail, for he was back again as quickly as he went, armed with the party-colored pole that standeth ever at such shops as his master's. "Now God defend the right! and look to thyself, old Brazen-nose!" added he.

"Villain! dost fight a gentleman with such a heathenish weapon as a barber's pole?" exclaimed the captain in a monstrous astonishment. "Down with it, fellow, or I will mince thee into nothing!"

"Nay, if thou likest not a barber's weapon, thou shouldst not draw upon a barber," quietly replied Harry Daring, as he boldly made up to him. "And now for thy ribs!"

Would I had Dan Homer's pen to describe the famous combat that took place betwixt these two heroes; for of mine own cunning can I never give the reader an idea of it which will come sufficiently nigh unto the reality—yet what my poor skill can effect he must needs put up with. First, then, there was the redoubtable Captain Swagger, foaming with wrath, flourishing of his formidable rapier, and skipping here and there and everywhere with a wonderful agility, to escape the blows that were quickly aimed at him. To him came Harry Daring, a very hero among apprentices, who crept cautiously along, holding of his pole with both hands a little in advance of him, with an excellent brave countenance, and ever and anon giving a poke at his opponent wherever he saw a place unguarded. The captain, retreating with a marvellously imposing front, and the apprentice following him round the shop, as if valorously resolved to conquer or to die. The one slashed about him his huge sword in a truly dangerous fashion; but the other came to the poke with his barber's pole in so decided a manner, that his enemy seemed to like the appearance of it less and less every moment.

"Oh, that I could get but one cut at thee!" cried the captain. "I would pay thee handsomely for the villanous hurt thou hast given me on my right side."

"Take that on thy left—then one side shall not grumble at t'other," replied the apprentice, hitting him another desperate poke where he had said.

"Villain, thou wilt break my ribs!" thundered out his antagonist, evidently in as great pain as rage.

"Then art thou but an ass for not having them made stronger," answered the other. "But look at thy toes, I pry thee!" and then down came the end of the pole right upon his foot, so heavily that he bawled out with the pain, and began to limp about after such a sort as would have been piteous to look upon, had not the absoluteness of his rage made of him so droll a figure.

"I tell thee, fellow, I will have my action of battery against thee!" exclaimed Captain Swagger, making such desperate exertions to ward off the blows of his adversary, and to get out of the way of his terrible weapon, that his great fiery face seemed all in a muck.

"*That* for thy action of battery, old Brazen-nose!" replied Harry Daring, dealing him so famous a poke in his stomach, that it clean sent him over the three-legged stool, with his heels in the air, his hat flying away to one place, and his rapier to another, and his back coming with a monstrous thump upon the floor.

"Yield thyself my prisoner—rescue or no rescue!" cried the boy, stepping up to the fallen combatant with the air of a conquering knight-errant.

"Oh, my back! my back!" groaned the captain, as he attempted to rise.

"By Gog and Magog, thou shalt not rise from this till thou hast agreed upon thy ransom, Sir Brazier," said the apprentice gravely, as he poked him down again with his pole.

"Wilt murder me, varlet?" asked Captain Swagger, looking at the dreadful weapon of his opponent as if there was instant death in it.

"Nay, I will harm thee not, by the

honor of chivalry, provided thou dost agree to two or three things I shall require of thee."

"Prythee tell me what they be, and let me up."

"First, thou shalt acknowledge thyself conquered in fair fight."

"Granted. Oh, my back!"

"Secondly, thou shalt pay for thy ransom one shilling of good and lawful money of our sovereign lady Queen Elizabeth."

"Agreed. My ribs be as soft as butter. Oh!"

"Lastly, thou shalt from this time forward and for ever, hold in most especial veneration and respect the goodly weapon that hath caused thy overthrow—to wit, a barber's pole."

"Spare me there, I prythee!" groaned the prostrate captain, in the most piteous accents ever heard; "I would pay thee another shilling sooner."

"What, dost murmur, Sir Brazier?" cried out Harry Daring, and was just about to give him an additional poke, when the door opened, and turning round he beheld Master Francis. "Ah! I am right glad to see thee!" he exclaimed, going up to his visiter and shaking him by the hand with great heartiness—"for in truth I have missed thee exceedingly."

"But what hast been about with this good gentleman, Harry?" inquired his young friend, who marvelled greatly at seeing of them in such a position.

"What! hast dared to rise?" exclaimed the boy, upon perceiving that as soon as his back had turned the captain had sprung on his legs, with a wonderful agility considering how hurt he was.

"I pray you hold him, good sir," cried Captain Swagger, as he made haste to pick up his sword and hat. "He hath used me villanously. He hath hurt my back, my ribs, and my toes, beyond all endurance, by poking me with that heathenish weapon of his. Indeed, he be the horriblest young wretch, and the absolutest little villain—"

"Ha! dost call names, Brazen-nose?" shouted the apprentice, lifting up his pole as if to renew the combat; but no sooner had the captain caught sight of his intention, than, with a look of the most exceeding horror and alarm, he made two or three tremendous strides to the door, and was out of the house without another word.

"Oh, Master Francis, I have had such exquisite fine fun!" said the boy, after a long fit of laughing, upon seeing of Captain Swagger take himself off in so evident a fright; and then he told the other the whole account of his attempts at chirurgery—at the which, though his companion seemed in a monstrous melancholy humor, he could not help smiling more than once. "Indeed, Master Francis," added he at the last, "if thou hadst heard me speaking of my fine Latin, and the infinite gravity of my behavior, thou wouldst never have forgotten it. But the rage of the old witch—that was the fun! Nay, I do think that the sight of Brazen-nose skipping away from the pole like a roast chestnut bouncing from the fire, was the exquisitest fun of the two. But what aileth thee? for in honest truth thou lookest marvellously disturbed."

"'Tis nothing—Harry!—'tis nothing," replied Master Francis.

"At least I rejoice exceedingly to see thee so famously attired," continued his companion, looking with admiring eyes upon his handsome dress, "and to wear a sword too! Well, he that says thou art not worthy of it lies in his throat; and I would like to cudgel him within an inch of his life. For in truth, in my estimation, thou art good enough for anything. Dost remember when we two were at old Tickletoby's, and thou wert a reading to me the romance of King Arthur and other famous histories? Thou didst then say, if so be thou shouldst ever have the good hap to become a knight, which I always thought would be the case, then should I be thy faithful esquire. Prythee tell me if it be possible to be where thou art—if so, I will straight show my indentures a fair pair of heels; for though I may have sport enough sometimes, in honest truth I would rather wear a sword as thou dost; and should think nothing so pleasant as to be alongside of thee fighting of the paynims and such like caitiffs. Indeed, there be none I think so true a friend as art thou, when I remember the many times thou hast saved me the birch by helping of me in my tasks."

"Hast forgot, dear Harry, how many uncivil boys thou hast beat who did call me names?" inquired Master Francis, kindly. "Some nearly twice thy size, too."

"Ah, thou wert then exceeding delicate," replied Harry Daring, "and unfit to cope with such. Yes, I remember me what a bout I had of it with big Jack o' the Turnstile, for calling of thee 'Molly-coddle'—a murrain on him! He got two famous black eyes, and had his villanous

nose pummelled for him till it was as red and as big as a carrot. By Gog and Magog, that was exquisite fine fun!" And then the boy chafed his hands as if with wonderful delight. "But I should like to fight for thee all my life long, if there be need of it; and be thy faithful friend and follower wherever thou goest."

"If I can get thee to be where I am, Harry, it shall be done," replied Master Francis.

"That be brave news indeed!" cried the barber's apprentice very joyfully—"then a fig's end for old Lather—and Esculapius, and Aristotle, and all the whole tribe of such pestilent knaves and thorough-going villains as they are, that can do nothing but give the horridest crack-jaw Latin names to things, that ever puzzled an innocent poor boy's brains to remember, may go hang!"

Harry Daring now went and restored the pole to its proper place.

"Seeing Geoffrey Sarsnet, the jolly mercer, at his door," said the boy, as he returned to his companion, "it hath put me in mind of a something methinks 'tis my duty to tell thee." Observing that his friend looked at him very earnestly, he continued—"Believe me, I like not the part of a talebearer, or to be a meddling with what concerneth me not: but noticing how hugely thou dost affect that Joanna——"

"Ha! what of her?" exclaimed Master Francis hurriedly. "Go on, Harry, I can hear anything now."

"Look not so pale then, I prythee!" observed the other with great concern, as he noticed the effect that had been produced by the mentioning of her name.

"Mind me not at all, I prythee, but tell what thou hast to say," said the youth with some eagerness.

"Well, I will," added the apprentice. "Then I take it to be the part of a true friend (the which I ever wish to prove myself to thee, Master Francis), that if one friend setteth his heart upon a pretty wench, the other, if he believeth that she playeth him false, should tell him of it as speedily as may be. And as it be my custom to go in the early morning to bathe in the river with Jack o' the Turnstile, long-legged Tom, the tailor's son round the corner, and Peter Perriwinkle, our neighbor the chandler's apprentice, I did notice sundry times, a man closely muffled up in a huge cloak and slouched hat, leaving of Geoffrey Sarsnet's house at daybreak. There was something marvellous suspicious about him, else had I noticed him not; and the extreme cautiousness with which the door was opened and closed, as if to make no noise, did still the more attract my attention. Knowing that the old man was one not likely to have any such mysterious visiters, methought 'twas passing strange: and never seeing who it was that let him out, because of the person keeping so close behind the door all the while, I knew not what to make of it. However, as it so happened, one morn when the door opened as usual, the wind blowing pretty high at the time, I had the good hap to see part of a kirtle, that I recognised on the instant, and"——

"Who's was it?" inquired Master Francis, who had listened with too much anxiety to hear the narration to the end.

"Joanna's," replied the boy.

"And, like enough!" added the other with some sort of bitterness.

"But let it not move thee so, I prythee!" cried Harry Daring, noticing in great trouble the painful expression of his friend's countenance.

"And yet she hath done me great kindnesses!" exclaimed the youth, as if to himself.

"Though it look not well, mayhap there shall be no harm in it," observed the other, as if with a view of affording some consolation.

"But I have known that of her that hath harm in it!" exclaimed Master Francis, more disturbed than ever; "that had it not come of mine own knowledge, would I not have believed—and now it be easy enough to credit almost any treachery. No! I will never allow myself to be bribed into a toleration of such villanous deceits!"

"Well—if she do play her jade's tricks, let her go hang!" said the young chirurgeon indignantly. "I tell thee, Master Francis, if that be it, she be not worth the caring for. Thou art as sweet a young gentleman as eye would wish to look on; therefore shalt thou easily meet with her betters at any time. I say again, let her go hang!"

"She hath done me many great kindnesses—the which I now wish she had never done, or that she had left unthought of that which I now know of her," observed the youth in extreme thoughfulness; then starting up suddenly, cried out, "but who was he she let out."

"That know I not," replied the boy. "For, as I told thee, he was so muffled up, there was no getting a glimpse of his countenence, or, in fact, of anything to

know him by. Methinks, however, he was much about the size of that spouting piece of fustian, Ralph Goshawk, whom I have noticed to visit there very frequently of late."

"Dost think 'twas he?" inquired Master Francis, with much earnestness.

"I would not affirm it, of an absolute truth," answered Harry Daring. "Although I mislike the fellow hugely, and would as soon give him a bloody coxcomb as look at him; for, indeed, I take him to be the impudentest jackanapes, and the shallowest poor fellow I ever came a nigh. I can not abide his tragedy airs. But whether he be or be not the villain, I should take it kindly if thou wouldst let me break his fool's head for him."

"Why, he be twice as big as thee, Harry," said his companion.

"What care I for his bigness?" replied the apprentice. "In truth, the bigger he may be, seemeth all the more favorable, for then shall he afford space for a greater cudgelling. The varlet, for all the greatness of his humors, be nothing better than a very paltry swaggerer; and I should take it exceeding kind of thee, if thou wouldst let me give him a bloody coxcomb."

"No, no, that must not be," observed Master Francis. "If he is to blame in this affair, his punishment must be at my hands. But I must make inquiries into this. As for her, I will see her, and have done with her." So saying, he bid a hurried "good-by" to his companion, and immediately crossed the way to the mercer's.

CHAPTER XV.

Sooner hard steel will melt with southern wind,
A seaman's whistle calm the ocean,
A town on fire be extinct with tears
Than woman, vowed to blushless impudence,
With sweet behavior and soft minioning
Will turn from that where appetite is fixed:
O powerful blood, how thou dost slave their souls!
MARSTON.

Oh, what a sight it was wistfully to view
How she came stealing to the wayward boy;
To note the fighting conflict of her hue,
How white and red did each other destroy!
But now her cheek was pale, and by-and-by,
It flashed forth fire as lightning from the sky.
SHAKSPEARE.

"Ha, Master Francis!" exclaimed the jolly mercer, looking up from measuring of some silk, as the youth entered his shop. "I am rejoiced to see thee—more especially, as thou comest in such famous fashion as this. I heard of thy good fortune, and was desperate glad on't: for I liked thee well all along. And dost wear a sword, too? Well—see that thou be not too ready to draw upon a man; and, as for a woman, thou wilt do none such any harm, I warrant." And then the old fellow burst out in his customary short loud laugh.

"Is Joanna at home?" inquired his visiter.

"At home!" cried Geoffrey Sarsnet. "Why, she maketh herself at home wherever she goes. By cock and pye, I do verily believe though, that she be as much abroad when she be at home, as at home when she be abroad; for at times I know not what to make of her. In truth, she be given to strange humors, though willing enough when in the mood."

"Think you I shall find her up stairs?" asked the youth.

"Either up or down," replied the jolly mercer. "That is, if she allow herself to be found: for mayhap she shall be with some of her gallants—then shalt thou not find her, I warrant."

At any previous time such an intimation would have startled Master Francis; yet now it moved him not—though it passed him not unnoticed.

"But how fareth that superlative old pippin face, thine uncle?" inquired Geoffrey Sarsnet merrily. "Ha! if thou hadst but seen him last night singing of a miserable love-ditty to such a villanous hang-dog tune as the hundredth psalm, with a melancholy small voice, like that of a dying weasel hit on the head by a tinker's hammer, thou wouldest have laughed at it for the rest of thy life. But when he got up to dance the brawls, with his lack-lustre eyes sinking into his pate, as if to see that his wonderful small stock of brains escaped him not—that was a sight to look on. Haw! haw! haw!" and here the old fellow shook his lusty sides famously.

The youth marvelled greatly that his kinsman should so conduct himself, it being so opposite to the usual staidness of his manner.

"He aileth nothing," said he.

"By cock and pye, he *aled* so much last night, that I was forced to send Ralph Goshawk to see him home," observed the jolly mercer laughing as loud as ever. "He had put so much of my good liquor into him, that he had scarce left for himself 'standing room.'"

"I knew not that he was so given to drink," remarked the youth.

"I'faith I do believe this of him, that he be never given to drink unless the drink be given to him. Haw! haw! haw!" roared the old fellow, as if in exquisite delight with the conceit.

"I will just step to speak with Joanna," said Master Francis, moving off to the door.

"Prythee do," replied Geoffrey Sarsnet, "and see that thou hast a more pleasant look with thee at thy return; for, in truth, thy countenance seemeth about as cheerful as one that hath lost a shilling and found a groat." Thereupon the jolly mercer gave his customary laugh; then bawled out, in the same humor, as the youth was leaving the shop, "Take heed, and spoil no sport; for there be few gallants who like their privacy to be broken in upon when engaged with a pretty wench."

Master Francis went not up the stairs in any pleasanter mood for this, it may well be believed; but his thoughts were in a sort of confusion: He scarce knew what he would be about. The shock he received from what he gained knowledge of when he was under the gateway, had completely changed the current of his feelings toward Joanna, and what he had heard since was not like to do aught in her favor; yet was there still some lingering tenderness in his disposition on account of the many kindnesses she had done him, but when he came to think that these had been done but as bribes to keep him in compliance with her humors, as he thought more than once, his mind was made up; and he would have none of her. In this mood reached he the room that hath been previously described as the one he had been in before, the door of which standing open, he walked in: but there found he no one but Dame Margery, who seemed busy at dusting of the furniture.

"Ah, Master Francis, be that you?" exclaimed the old woman, seemingly with huge delight, as she observed who it was. "Well, to be sure! And how bravely you be dressed! In honest truth, dear heart! you be the sweetest young gentleman I've seen this many a day."

"Is Joanna at home, dame?" inquired the youth.

"No, dear heart!" replied she. "She hath stepped out some time since. And you wear a sword too! Indeed, you have as handsome an appearance with you as heart could desire."

"Know you what time she will return?" asked Master Francis, in some disappointment at not meeting with her.

"Nay, forsooth, how should I," answered the old woman with an indignant toss of her head, "seeing that she goeth out at all hours, and stayeth mayhap half the day, and no one knoweth a word of where she hath been. Well, they that live longest will see most. I be not so blind, Master Francis, as some folks think. I was not born yesterday: and the goings-on that I have seen would be a marvel to hear."

"If you know aught of Joanna that be not maidenly, you do not well in keeping it from me," said the youth.

"Maidenly!" exclaimed Dame Margery, with a very significant look, as she went and carefully closed the door. "I'faith, 'twould be strange indeed, could it be called maidenly. But, in honest truth, I like not to see you so imposed on. I have noticed, scores of times, with what an earnestness you do affect her, which hath the more shocked me to know how she misuses you. But if I tell you aught, how know I you will not tell of me again?"

"Be assured I will do no such thing," replied he.

"Indeed, she would be the ruin of me, knew she I told you of such matters," added the old woman, "for she be of a very revengeful nature, and of an exceeding bad heart, as is manifest by her letting me work my old bones till I be ready to drop; and she standing by as fine as you please, and never lending me a hand. There's many a time she might have said, 'Here be a dress of mine but little the worse for the wear, that be rather too tight in the sleeve—or, mayhap in the body—but, doubtless, 'twill fit you, dame, if you please to accept of it;" which she hath never done. In fact, the grace of God be not in her, that's a sure thing. And she be the wickedest deceitful creature that lives, for she hath ofttimes got me a rating of her father, when she might easy have prevented it. Forsooth, all the blame must come upon poor me, when I be as innocent as a babe."

"What hath come to your knowledge concerning of her unmaidenly doings?" said the youth, in a little impatience.

"Oh, scores of things, I warrant you," answered the dame, "and such things, that the speaking of them maketh me blush outright. Indeed, it be a most absolute truth that I be the virtuousest of women; and it be no other than a

burning shame in her to do what she hath, instead of following my excellent example. *I* never gave encouragement to a parcel of fellows, I warrant you. *I* never shut myself up in rooms with fine gallants—not I, by my troth! *I* never went nobody knows where, and stayed nobody knows how long, believe me! No! I was ever as discreet and modest as a virgin ought to be! that was I—and all the world knoweth it."

"Well, but what have you got to tell me, dame?" inquired Master Francis, rather earnestly.

"I be coming to it, kind heart," replied Margery. "Now, had it been my good fortune, at her years, to have met with such a sweet young gentleman as yourself, methinks I should have cared for no other; but she—she must entertain gallants by the score! Not only, forsooth, must she have a parcel of famous fine fellows to fill her head with nonsensical notions about love and the like—but she must needs have a few of meaner quality. Nay, for the matter of that, I do believe she be in no way particular. She liketh one as well as another, and careth only that there should be plenty of them. Would *I* have done such? I that was in such repute for the seriousness of my behavior, that no man dared so much as meddle with my kirtle? In honest truth, it be but five and twenty years last Martinmas"——

"But I have heard that before—I pray you, say at once what you have to tell me," said the youth, still more impatiently.

"Ah! but I forgot I had told you of it," continued the dame. "Well, then, to proceed. Often have I, going up the stairs in the dark, stumbled over some fellow sneaking out—who'd been after no good, I'll be bound, by the suspicious manner of his getting away; and when I have come into the room suddenly, I have surprised her with some of her fine gallants sitting as close as you please to her—mayhap with his villanous arm round her waist. Would *I* have done such? I that—but no matter. Then I have heard such whisperings in corners as were awful to listen to. And there was that Ralph Goshawk"——

"What of him, dame?" inquired her companion suddenly.

"Oh! the paltry fellow! Oh! the fustian rogue! I could never abide his presence," she added, as if in a monstrous indignation; "he would pass himself off for a gentleman, forsooth! and talk in as holyday terms as any lord: yet was he nothing but a trumpery haberdasher, who had no higher employment than the measuring out a yard or so of sad-colored taffeta for some tapster's widow. He be the impudentest varlet:—but I will acquaint you with what he did, Master Francis, no longer ago than last week, and you shall judge him for an unmannerly knave, as he is, that hath no respect for the virtuestest of women. This was it. I was sitting in the low-backed arm-chair, that hath a cushion in it, by the side of the kitchen-fire, mending of master's hose. I remember me, 'twas a pair of blue hose; for having no worsted of that color, I was obliged to go out as far as Jonathan Bodkin's, at the next corner, to get me a halfpenny ball. But you must needs know I be obliged to mend all master's hose, for she considereth herself too fine a lady to touch them;—and a famous labor be they, I do assure you, Master Francis, for master hath got a villanous fashion of wearing monstrous great holes in the heel, as big as a crown piece. Well, I was a putting in my stitches as closely as I might, when up comes this scurvy mealy-mouthed varlet, who had been sitting some two hours or more in the kitchen, talking the horriblest fustian to Joanna, about a certain Zenocrate (who was no better than she should be, I'll lay a wager, or she never could have tolerated such a paltry fellow as he is); and he says to me, in his thundering fine swaggering air,—

'And if thou pitiest Tamburlane the Great,—
Tell us, old woman, what o'clock it be.'

Oh! the scurvy villain! Oh! the fustian rapscallion!" continued she, seemingly in as great a rage as she could well be in, "to call me an old woman!—me that am not fifty yet. *He* Tamburlane the Great! A poor paltry twopenny-halfpenny haberdasher!—a swaggering rogue!—a very trumpery fellow, that hath no more respect for virtue than he hath for a rotten apple. Oh! I be out of all patience with his shameless impudency!"

"But what have you seen in his behavior to Joanna not proper in her to allow?" asked the youth, getting in some degree tired with the old woman's garrulousness.

"Seen!" exclaimed Margery, throwing up her hands and eyes, in amazement; "what is it I have not seen?" Then she came nearer to him, wearing a face of exceeding mysteriousness, and dropping her voice a little, added,—"I have seen him paddle with the palm of her hand in a way that was awful for to see. The

paltry fellow! I have seen him give her the shockingest looks that eye ever lighted on. The scurvy villain! I have seen him so horribly familiar with her, that the like was never before known in an honest house. The fustian rogue as he is, to call me an old woman! And as for her, instead of giving him such a setting down as might have put him to the blush for the villanousness of his conduct, as would I in such a case, she would sit smiling at him most abominably by the hour together; nay, she has actually got up to dance with him a gullard, and behaved with so thorough a wantonness, that I have oft been obliged to take myself off to bed, my virtue could no longer abide such infamous doings.

"But worse than that, Master Francis," continued the old woman, with increasing indignation, while the countenance of the youth exhibited considerable uneasiness; and coming closer, with a look of greater mystery she added in a deep low voice,—"I have seen that which would make your hair stand on end to hear of;" then observing that his cheek became still paler, and his look more disturbed, she proceeded first giving a cautious glance at the door:—"listen to me and you shall hear all. Coming down stairs in the early morning to do the household work, I oft noticed, during this last winter, when I went to light the fire in this chamber, that there were live embers in the grate; which I knew could not have been unless a fire had been kept burning till within an hour or so of my coming down. From this I gathered that she set up o' nights. My chamber being nigh unto hers, put me upon keeping awake, to know for a certainty if such was the case. I listened and watched all the next night, and sure enough I heard my dainty madam creeping to her chamber, nigh unto six o'clock in the morning. The next thing was to discover what she set up for; for I hugely suspected she was not likely to sit up for nothing. But this was a hard matter to know, she being as close as a fox; so that there be no getting at what she be about. Yet had I known such things of her with that fustian rapscallion Ralph Goshawk, and others, that I was as good as certain she was after what she should not. Well, I kept a planning and scheming, in hopes of finding it all out, for I knew there was something villanous at the bottom of it; when one morning, an hour or two before my usual hour of rising, up gets I; and after creeping as softly as a mouse down stairs, I saw by the light under this door that madam was there. I stood still and listened a bit; and as certain as I stand here, I heard a whispering. 'Ahum!' said I to myself, 'you be at your tricks sure enough;' then I just stooped down and took a peep through the keyhole, and there I saw,"—said the old woman, very slowly, and with great emphasis,—

"Saw what?" quickly inquired Master Francis, trembling so he could scarce stand.

"I saw Joanna and"—

"And who?"

"And a man!" cried Margery, starting back, her skinny lips puckered up, and her little sharp eyes fixed on him, with a stare of horror;—"but, hush!" she suddenly exclaimed, her wrinkled and yellow physiognomy changing its expression from intense indignation to extreme caution—"that be her foot on the stair: say not a word, I pray you, else shall I be ruined." No sooner, however, had Joanna entered at the door, which she then did—looking more beautiful than ever, dressed as if from a walk—than, with a smile, the old woman hastened up to her.

"It be you beyond all doubt," said she, as if overjoyed to see her, "as I was just a saying to this good youth. Indeed, and you have the sweetest bloom on your delicate cheek I have seen you wear a long time. I warrant me now, you have had a right pleasant walk."

"Take these things and put them in my chamber," said the mercer's daughter to her, as she took off and gave into her hands her hat, muffler, and cloak.

"Ah, that will I upon the instant," replied Margery, cheerfully; and then, as soon as Joanna's back was turned from her, she gave a look full of meaning to Master Francis, put her finger to her lip, and hastened away.

During these few seconds the youth had been in a very agony of conflicting emotions. He seemed making up of his mind what to do; and yet there was such a tumult in him, of rage, and jealousy, and indignation, that he looked as if he knew not what he was about.

"I can scarce think that the voyage hath done you good, Francis," observed Joanna, as she approached him—"for in truth you look not so well as you used."

"Like enough," replied he, bitterly—"ay, it be exceeding like indeed."

"What aileth you?" she inquired, with much tenderness.

"Sick at heart! sick at heart!" quickly answered Master Francis—"sick of

the villanous deceits that have been played upon me. Like enough indeed to look not so well as I was. I went in the extreme comfort of thinking myself beloved by one I imagined to be possessed of a goodly store of all honorable virtues.—I return but to find that I have been the dupe of the very wickedest wanton that ever disgraced God's earth."

"What mean you by this?" asked the mercer's daughter, seemingly in great astonishment.

"What mean I?" exclaimed the youth, indignantly. "Hast done no ill thing?—hast given me no provocation to quarrel since I have been away, by the infamousness of thy behavior?"

"None!" replied she, with exceeding earnestness. "I have done no ill thing: I have done nothing that should give you provocation to quarrel."

"Ha! and indeed?" cried her companion, now still more incensed against her; "dost tell me that, and come straight from the kisses of my Lord Cobham?" At hearing this the color mounted into her cheek a little, of which he took speedy notice and continued: "I see nature will take no part in so monstrous a lie. But I will at once confess that I was nearly as nigh unto you as I may be at this present, and heard all the shameless impudency of your proceedings. In truth, you have made of your lips a common, upon which every ass may find pasture. Go to! you are a wanton." And so saying, he turned away from her.

"I pray you, Francis, speak not in this way," said Joanna, in a very serious manner, and with a face somewhat troubled. "That my Lord Cobham hath caressed me, I acknowledge; but that I gave him any such return, is most untrue: and of aught worse than that done by me at any time, know I nothing."

"Dost think I can believe any such thing from you?" asked Master Francis, suddenly. "Dost think I know not more of such conduct?—even if 'twere not enough to condemn you by, as the stealing under a public gateway with one so noted, and going into hidden corners to be caressed by him. I tell you he be not the only one—nor Ralph Goshawk, whom you did unblushingly assure me you cared not for, to whom you have given such villanous encouragement; for I have knowledge of divers fine gallants that you must needs have to attend upon you, doubtless to afford you the like gratification. Nay, to such a pitch of shamelessness have you arrived, that it be known to more than one you have a man with you in private the whole night long, and then do yourself secretly let him out into the street in the early morning. And this hath been done too when you have sworn you loved me alone! I do believe there existeth not in this world so deceitful a creature—one of so false a heart and of so profligate a nature—one so thoroughly lost to all sense of honor and of true affection. Why, the wretchedest woman that liveth upon her own iniquity, be no other than what she seems, and seeketh not to pass for anything better; but thou hast added hypocrisy to sin, and would hide the disposition of a wanton under the character of a vestal."

"Take heed," exclaimed the mercer's daughter, who, as she had listened, had become exceeding pale—her bosom heaved mightily—her brilliant eyes shot quick and uneasy glances, and, altogether, her appearance was that of one marvellously disturbed. "Take heed, Francis, I can bear much from you, but this—this I can not bear."

"'Tis less than you have deserved," replied he. "And now I have done with you. There!" he cried, as approaching her closely he dashed at her feet the chain of gold she had of his uncle—"there lies one of the gifts with which you have sought to bribe me into a toleration of your infamous doings. And here!" he added, as he followed it with a purse that seemed tolerably well filled—"here is that which will pay for the cost I have been to you in other things. Be assured it hath been honestly come by; and not like your costly presents and generous supplying of my wants—the liberal wages of a more liberal iniquity."

To this she answered not save by a slight gasping as if for breath; but her brow became darker, and the expression of her eyes unnatural.

"I now take my leave of you," added Master Francis in a voice somewhat tremulous. "I care not if I ever see you again. You have misjudged me hugely if you thought I was of such a nature as to tolerate for a single moment the infamy you have been about. Your judgment and your gifts have been equally misplaced. My heart is not one of so mean a sort as to suffer itself to be satisfied with the affections of a jilt; nor is my disposition so base as to suffer itself to be bribed by a"——

"Villain!" screamed Joanna, as she furiously clutched him by the throat with both her hands before the offensive word

had been spoken. "Dost think I can be maddened in this vile way, and bear it tamely! If thou hadest twenty lives they would scarce be atonement enough for so atrocious an insult. Thou hast traduced me. Thou hast spoken of me the horriblest things—the falsest—vilest—wickedest matters that ever misused woman hath been forced to endure. Dost think to live? Dost hope for mercy that hath shown none? Thou hast tortured me into a raging madness! My heart is ready to burst—and my brain reels! But thy life shall be the forfeit. Thy life, villain—thy life!"

Master Francis was so seized by surprise that he seemed not to have had time to make any struggle, for she had grasped him with such exceeding violence that he had only the power to move up his arms a little and then let them fall; and his face grew black with an extreme suddenness, so that when she took away her hands from about his neck, his head fell back, and he was falling to the ground like one that is taken with a sudden death, when Joanna sprung forward and caught him in her arms.

"Why, I have not killed thee, sure!" exclaimed she, apparently in wonderful consternation. "Nay, it can not be!—Indeed, I meant it not! 'Twas but the madness of the moment. Oh! what a wretch have I been if I have done thee any hurt. Francis!—dear—dear Francis!—I will forgive all the vile things thou hast said of me if thou wilt not look at me so horribly. Move but a limb—breathe—or let me feel but the beating of thy heart. No—all be as still as a stone. Oh, God! he is dead—he is dead, and I have killed him!" So saying she clasped him close to her breast with many piteous sobs, and with the saddest wildest look eye ever beheld. Again she felt for his heart; but there was no beating; she looked to his lips, but they were slightly open, and breathed not at all; and eagerly watched all his limbs as if to observe the slightest movement, but the quietness of death seemed to be upon them. The eyelids were not quite closed, and little of the eyes save the white part was to be seen, which made them appear to look very ghastly and unnatural; and the delicacy of his complexion was scarce discernible for the discoloring of the skin, which marvellously increased his deathlike appearance.

"Alack!—what a sight is this! What *a villanous* thing have I done!" she continued as she kept kissing of his lips, and pressing of him to her bosom with a very heart-broken countenance. "I that have loved thee better than all the world beside, and would freely have given my own life to have saved thine! I know not what could have possessed me to lay hands on thee. Oh! 'twas a most horrid wickedness! Francis!—thou who hath ever been to me the gentlest, fondest, and best of creatures, and that I have loved more as a child of mine own than aught else. Oh! speak but a word, or my heart will break! Indeed, and on my life, and heart, and soul, and all things that be most sacred in this world—thou hast been most shamefully deceived in what thou didst say of me. I have done no such vileness. Alack!—Alack! He heeds me not!"

Then she carefully laid him down on the floor, and stood over him for the space of something more than a minute, wringing of her hands, and sobbing in such sort as none could see unmoved; when, suddenly, as if a thought had struck her, she began vigorously chafing of one of his hands with both hers, and then the other; and then she unfastened his doublet and chafed his breast in the same manner, lifting up with her other arm his head the whilst, which she pressed closely to her; and kissing of his forehead; and sobbing wonderfully; and ever and anon saying all sorts of endearing things to him. All at once he gave a slight gasp. At this she uttered such a scream of exultation that surely the like was never heard; and fell to a chafing of his breast with more vigorousness than ever—now laughing, now crying, now caressing of him, now pressing him fondly, in so wild and distracted a manner as was a marvel to look upon. In a little time he gave a stronger gasp; then two or three; then moved his arms, sighing very heavily. Presently his eyelids opened more and he looked about him with a strange unconscious stare, and kept breathing with some sort of difficulty. The blackness went from his face, leaving it exceeding pale, and his lips got a little more color in them.

Seeing these things, Joanna grew so agitated that she was obliged gently to put his head again upon the ground whilst she stood up a bit. Then she pressed her temples in her hands, and seemed as if she was striving to collect her scattered thoughts. In a few moments she went to a cupboard and poured out some wine into a cup, with which

she presently returned to him, and setting his head against her shoulder, she poured the liquid down his throat. This appeared to produce a wonderful good effect, for in a few minutes his cheek lost much of its extreme pallidness; his eyes looked as if with some knowledge of where he was; and he breathed not so hard as he had done but a moment since. Making a movement as if to rise, Joanna placed her arm around his waist, and assisted him up; but she spoke not a word, nor had she done so since he had given such signs of his returning life as showed he had some consciousness of surrounding things.

In truth, she seemed in extreme perplexity as to how she should conduct herself. She knew not what to say, and scarce what to do. So monstrously ashamed was she that the violence of her passion should have led her into so great a wickedness as the attempting of his life, that she felt as if she could urge nothing in defence of it; and scarce dared look him in the face. Every moment she expected him to overwhelm her with reproaches; and the more she thought upon the matter, the more bewildered did she seem to get. At last, when she had got him to stand upright, and found he could do so without assistance, her uneasiness became so great, that she was obliged to leave him and lean upon the back of a chair for support. As for Master Francis, he was in such a state of mind, that he could not for some time, remember what had taken place. He looked about him like one amazed. He thought that something terrible had been done, but he knew not what. It happened that his gaze wandering about the room, met that of Joanna, who was watching him with great anxiety; and then, by degrees the whole scene, till he was deprived of consciousness, came upon his memory. At this, in a sort of horror, he shook in every limb, and looked as if he was about to fall; which seeing, Joanna, regardless of all else but his safety, hastened to support him; but the weakness was only momentary, and gently pushing her from him, with a look of mingled terror and dislike, he turned from her, and slowly left the room.

Joanna moved not, and turned not her eyes from him till the door closed, when she had just strength left to totter to a chair; were she was found about an hour afterward by Dame Margery, with her arm thrown over the back, and her head leaning on it, in a state of complete insensibleness.

CHAPTER XVI.

—— nature only helpt him, for looke thorow
This whole book, thou shalt find he doth not borrow
One phrase from Greekes, nor Latines imitate,
Nor once from vulgar languages translate.
DIGGES.

Dawberry. Whither speeds his boldness?
Check his rude tongue, great sir!
King Henry. O, let him range:
The player's on the stage still, 'tis his part;
He does but act. FORD.

Now before Jove, admirable! By Phœbus, my sweet facetious rascal, I could eat water-gruel with thee for a month, for this jest, my dear rogue.—
BEN JONSON.

A NUMEROUS party were assembled in one of the queen's withdrawing-rooms, consisting principally of the ladies of her court, to hear Master Shakspeare read a new play which he had writ upon her majesty's suggestion, as hath been described. Master Shakspeare stood with his back to the light, and his face to the queen, reading of his manuscript, with his audience in a half circle before him, in the centre of which sat Queen Elizabeth in her chair of state, looking exceeding pleased, and dressed with marvellous grandeur; having at her right hand the earl of Essex attired very gorgeously, and leaning on her majesty's chair with the air of one that is privileged to say what he lists, ever and anon making of such remarks as the circumstances seemed to give good warrant for; and joining in her majesty's mirth, whenever it was exhibited, with a heartiness which showed that in such instances, to play the courtier was nothing but natural to him. It was remarked of all, that never had the queen looked so gracious, for she kept turning and smiling upon the handsome nobleman at her side, and saying of this thing and that thing after so amiable a fashion; and commended Master Shakspeare so liberally, that the whole court were moved with admiration. All present appeared in an excellent fine humor, and listened with the very profoundest attention. Some looked to be in a continual smile—others frequently did indulge themselves with a giggle—and some few, who seemed as though they could not confine their mirth within such modest bounds, must needs laugh aloud.

By this time Master Shakspeare had got into the third act of his play, which hath become so singularly liked of the

world, under the title of "The Merry Wives of Windsor," and that it lacked nothing in the reading of it is beyond all possibility of doubt. Indeed it may be said, without starting from the truth any great way, so altered he his voice, and expressed he the dialogue with such a natural manner, that any one, at the shutting of his eyes, might have fancied he heard many different persons. In truth, there wanted no more actors. He was the whole dramatis personæ in himself. This excellent talent of his made his hearers receive the scene of the challenge between the choleric Welchman and the equally incensed French doctor, in the field nigh unto Frogmore, with wonderful admiration. But when came Sir John Falstaff put into the buck-basket by the merry wives, and the account he gives of it to the jealous husband, surely nothing could exceed the delight with which it was received.

"In honest truth, Master Shakspeare," cried the queen very merrily, "that fat knight of yours is like to make our sides ache. Oh, the absolute villain! Oh, the monstrous rogue! I'faith 'tis in excellent conceit. We are taken with the humor of it mightily. What say you, my lord," exclaimed the queen, turning to her favorite, "doth it not seem to you as ridiculous as heart could wish?"

"Please your majesty, never have I been so taken with any play," replied the Lord Essex. "It hath in it a wonderful store of wit certainly—indeed, I take it to be as rare a device of the mind as was ever writ."

"What say you, my Lady Howard," inquired her majesty, turning round to the Lady Howard of Walden, who was to the left of her, "think you the villanous old fellow was well served of those merry wives, by being stuffed into the buck-basket, and then cast into the ditch at Datched mead?"

"Indeed, please your majesty, methinks he had the very properest reward for his abominable impudency," answered her ladyship. "I would have served him worse, for I would have had the greasy rogue smothered to death, or drowned outright."

"Nay, that's too bad of you," observed the queen, "'twould be but right to let him live and repent him of his misdoings. But, odds my life, he be so droll a fish none should have the heart to kill him."

"O' my word, so think I," added my Lord Essex, "your majesty hath expressed the very drift of my mind in this. I must say I like the varlet hugely, and consider a ducking or so a very fitting punishment for his offences."

"Nay, I think it be monstrous of him, at his time of life, that he should be gallanting of two women at once—and they married too!" cried Lady Blanche Somerset, who was somewhat of a prude.

"*Married two!*" exclaimed my Lord Bumble, who had heard not enough of what had passed to give him a proper knowledge of the matter. "Married two did he? that be clean bigamy: that is to say, if he had marriage of one while the other was above ground; but if one of the two shall have become a defunct, then shall there be no harm in't."

"Proceed, Master Shakspeare," said the queen; and not without a smile at the mistake of her lord in waiting, which seemed to have amused many. "We are marvellously anxious to learn how Sir John speeds in his wooing."

Master Shakspeare had said nothing hitherto, yet did he seem in no way abashed at being among so many people of worship, for he turned his intelligent eyes from one to the other as either spoke, as if regarding with some amusement the variety of characters before him, as each displayed some distinct feature in what was said, or in the manner of saying it. Then fell he to the perusing of the fourth act, in the very first scene of which, where the Welsh parson is trying of the boy in his Latin grammar, the queen once or twice did put up her fan and giggled very prettily, and thereupon her ladies seemed wonderfully confused, and giggled also; and the lords and gentlemen smiled somewhat: but when in the next scene Sir John Falstaff is in such a wonderful anxiousness to escape, in consequence of Mistress Page bringing intelligence of Master Ford being a coming from birding, with a whole company to search the house for him; and the jealousy of the husband is made so manifest, and he beateth the old knight in his disguise, taking him for to be the fat woman of Brentford, whose dress he weareth, every one appeared to laugh till their ribs were like to crack.

"Better and better!" exclaimed the queen, in evident delight, when he came to the ending of the act. "These be merry wives indeed! I'faith 'tis the difficultest thing possible to say which serve they out the best—Master Jealouspate the husband, or that huge piece of roguery Sir John Falstaff. Is it not so, my lord?"

"Without doubt," replied my Lord Essex, "nothing have I seen in play or history so painted to the life. That your majesty hath extreme discrimination in the detection of that which be most admirable where there is much excellence, what hath just fallen from you proves."

"Nay, my lord, you flatter," said her majesty, smiling upon him all the time very graciously. "We have but an indifferent judgment in these things. Our opinion must be scarce worth the having. Mayhap we have just wit enough to know the good from the bad: but, indeed, that be all our poor knowledge can lay claim to."

"That will I never believe, please your majesty," cried my Lord Henry Howard, who was close behind her chair. "For of all human creatures that breathed, never met I one that came at all nigh unto your majesty in niceness of judgment; not only upon such matters as are now honored with your infinite condescension, but in all things whatsoever, whether they be of the simplest or of the difficultest nature to comprehend."

"You think too well of us, my lord," observed the queen, evidently taking what was said in very good part. "It be but as we have expressed it. Such knowledge as we possess must needs be but small."

"By my troth, then, the wisdom of all else must be none at all, please your majesty," exclaimed the Lady Howard; "for as it is beyond all contradiction that your majesty's wisdom toppeth that of the wisest of our time to an extent that be wonderful to observe, if, as your majesty is pleased to say, it must needs be but small, the smallness of the wisest of your subjects can not but be of such sort as may not be visible. But 'tis the modesty of your majesty's disposition that leadeth you to say this."

"Indeed, her majesty is noted for an exceeding modesty," said Lady Blanche Somerset.

"That be a true thing!" cried my Lord Bumble, who leaned forward with his head a little on one side, to catch with his ear, as well as his deafness would allow, the purport of what was said. "Her majesty is noted of all for an exceeding *modest eye*."

"O' my life, my Lord Bumble, that be the prettiest blunder we have met with a long time," exclaimed the queen, in an infinite pleasant humor, while there was no lack of smiling and tittering among the courtiers, at the mistake.

"As your majesty says, it be the prettiest wonder we have met with a long time," added the old lord, who, from the great length of his service in the palace, was oft allowed by the queen a greater license than had many others of more influence. "By this hand, know I not a prettier wonder in the whole world than such a modest eye. 'Tis a marvel to look on. There be no such another anywhere."

"Alack then, are we blind of an eye!" cried her majesty, laughingly; which conceit did so tickle the fancy of those around her, that the mirth it created was in such excess, and the commendation it received was so abundant, that, surely no wit had been ever so received. All this time, my Lord Bumble fearful, by the general laughter, that he had said something amiss, did keep turning from one to the other, in extreme consternation, as if to learn by their faces what strange error he had had the ill hap to commit.

"Now, Master Shakspeare," exclaimed the queen, "we are wonderfully desirous of learning what next these merry wives of yours shall do with that fat knight."

At this Master Shakspeare, on whom it may well be believed nothing had been lost of the preceding conversation, did go on with the reading of his play. The description of how Sir John Falstaff, in the last act, was cozened into the taking upon him the disguise of Herne the hunter, and how he was tormented by the pretended fairies when he lay under the oak in Windsor forest, hoping there to have much pleasure with Mistress Page and Mistress Ford, according to their appointment; and how they and their husbands did jeer and laugh when they came upon him in his concealment, was taken in huge delight of all parties; but the manner in which Ann Page tricked the simpleton Master Slender, and the choleric old French doctor, by getting each of them to run away with a boy, dressed up in such clothes as they expected to find her in, while she went and got married to her own love, seemed to be liked best of all.

"An admirable ending, Master Shakspeare," exclaimed the queen, in her most gracious manner, at the conclusion of it. "We like that mum and budget conceit infinitely; indeed the whole play is one of exceeding meritoriousness; and be assured that we will go to the playhouse the first time it shall be acted." At the hearing of this, all the courtiers did join in commendation of the play, as if one

was striving to exceed the other in the liberality of his praise.

"If there be any merit in it, please your majesty," said Master Shakspeare, respectfully, "without doubt 'tis owing to your majesty's infinite condescension, in having desired of me the production of such a play; therefore I can not say the merit be mine, but must, in proper honesty, give it to the illustrious source from which it sprung."

This speech appeared to give her majesty great satisfaction, for she looked well pleased at it; and the ladies around her spoke to one another in commendation of Master Shakspeare's modesty, and did regard him with a wonderful pleased aspect.

"Nay, you shall do yourself no such wrong," replied the queen, with a kindness of manner that was truly admirable; the performance is of your sole invention, to the which we have contributed not one line; therefore in no case can we claim the smallest partnership in the merit. We have been hugely taken with that fat knight of yours all along, and we have found so much gratification in the very proper treatment of him by the merry wives, that we shall think the better of Windsor for containing such."

At this the courtiers began a praising of her majesty's liberality, for so handsomely denying having any share in the excellence of what at least had been done at her instigation; and in consequence thereof she might justly, they said, have claimed some part of the merit; and all, marvelling at the extreme pleasantness of her majesty's humor, did anticipate that it would be to Master Shakspeare's profit. In that it seemed, from what immediately followed, they were not without some grounds.

"Think you there is aught in which we could do you a service?" inquired the queen.

"That is there, please your majesty, I should like done of all things," answered Master Shakspeare.

"Speak, then, what you would have; and if it be within modest bounds, it shall be granted," added the queen.

"Please your majesty, 'tis but for the pardon of a distressed friend of mine, that hath the ill hap to offend your majesty," said Master Shakspeare, with exceeding urgency; "he is one of most notable good parts; as gallant a gentleman that breathes; infinite in his accomplishments, and princely in his disposition; who hath borne himself so on manifold occasions, as is alike honorable to your majesty, whom it was once his pride and happiness to serve; and creditable to himself, who now languisheth in a prison in utter hopelessness, at having, in some misguided moment, incurred your majesty's displeasure. I will wager my life he is heartily sorry for what he hath done amiss; and that there lives not in this bountiful world one who, if he were allowed, would serve your majesty with more honesty, valor, and devotedness."

"And who may this distressed friend of yours happen to be?" asked the queen, in some degree pleased to meet with one of such a nature as would rather ask for another than for himself.

"Sir Walter Raleigh," replied he.

Thereupon every one did look amazed at Master Shakspeare's imprudence, and the queen's brow grew black of a sudden.

"We are astonished that you could find no better request to make," observed the queen, somewhat angrily; yet in her heart wondering that there should come before her one so bold as, in his first request of her, to plead for a disgraced favorite. "He hath done us such extreme dishonor as surely never before did crowned queen suffer of a subject. We have had him placed where he shall have time to repent him of such shameful misdoings; and there 'tis our good pleasure he shall remain. As for yourself, Master Shakspeare, you have done greatly amiss in speaking of such a traitor. It seemeth to us somewhat overbold of you. Go your ways, sir, and when we next allow of your asking of us a favor, see that it contains no such offensive matter."

At this Master Shakspeare bowed very low, yet with a marvellous dignity, that was the admiration of all, and was about to depart from the presence, when my Lord of Essex, who, notwithstanding his exceeding pride, and jealousy of any that did seem to interfere with his supremacy, was possessed of some noble qualities, thought to put in a word for him.

"Please your majesty," said he, "it be all out of the very honesty of Master Shakspeare's nature, that he hath said this, I will be bound for it. My honorable friend the Lord Southampton, hath given me great commendation of him; and I do assure your majesty he is in excellent good report of all men. What he hath urged in behalf of his friend is in the manner natural; and methinks he might escape blame without

any dishonor to your majesty, whose bountifulness of heart can in no way suffer by it. I pray you, let not what he hath said move you against him, for I for one, who it may be supposed am not like to go out of my way to say aught upon the matter, do consider that Sir Walter Raleigh hath the requisites of a very noble gentleman."

Now the courtiers knew not which to marvel at most—the imprudence of Master Shakspeare in requesting pardon for his friend, or the magnanimity of my Lord of Essex in speaking in favor of his rival; but the consequence of my lord's speaking was, that the queen did give Master Shakspeare a more gracious dismissal than she seemed before inclined to do; and acknowledged that she believed her captain of the guard had many commendable qualities: and it now appeared to those around her, a greater marvel than all, that her majesty should say this when it was known he had done her so grievous a wrong.

Master Shakspeare made all haste from the palace to the lodgings of Master Burbage in Cheapside, in great disappointment that he had succeeded no better for Sir Walter Raleigh, whom he greatly esteemed; yet in some hope that the consequences would not be to his disadvantage. He found his friend dressed, and on the point of going out.

"Ha, Will!" exclaimed he, as soon as the other entered the room, "How liketh the queen thy new play? Doth it please her? Dost think 'twill draw her to the playhouse? How was it taken among the noble lords and fair ladies of the court?"

"I prythee have patience, Dick," replied Master Shakspeare, sitting of himself down awhile, "I will answer thy questions as speedily as I may. The queen liketh my new play well—it doth please her, because she liketh it—she will be at the playhouse the first time of its performance, because it pleaseth her—and the noble lords and fair ladies were taken with it exceedingly, because it was exceedingly taken of the queen."

"Bravo, Will! thou answereth marvellously to the purpose," cried Master Burbage, cutting a caper, as if the intelligence was hugely to his liking.

"I'faith, 'tis well that thou art pleased," remarked the other, "for I had need of half a dozen tongues to do justice to thy questions, they come so thick upon one."

"Tongues! Talk not to me of tongues, I prythee," exclaimed his companion, in seeming anger. "Thou hast one of such a sort that it requireth no other to help it. O' my life, I do believe thou couldst wheedle the moon into a nut-shell—thou hast got such a tongue. Didst thou not cut me out with the mercer's daughter, and be hanged to thee?"

"Indeed I fared no better than thyself in that quarter, believe me," said Master Shakspeare.

"No!" cried Master Burbage, in extreme astonishment. "What, did she not become villanously in love with thee? Did she not give thee most exquisite, fond entertainment? Didst thou not, now, in honest truth, find her 'a most delicious creature,' as thou didst say to me through the keyhole—thou aggravating villain!"

"In honest truth, then, Dick, I must answer to all thy questions—no!"

"Ha! ha! ha! 'tis good! 'tis excellent good!" exclaimed Master Burbage, and he began to caper about the room, seemingly in a monstrous delight. "That be the pleasantest news I have heard a long time; and, in truth, thou hast been but rightly served for the very heathenish wickedness thou didst commit, of cutting me out with her."

"Nay, I do assure thee, Dick, I knew not, till within a minute or so of thy coming, that thou wert at all of her acquaintance; and I then was resolved to have some sport at thy expense, merely because of thy having disparaged me to her, and claiming for thyself the merit of my best verses."

"Ah, that was done out of no malice, thou shouldst be well aware I said it but out of vanity, and would have been the very first to tell thee of it again. By this light, Will! I do think it lawful to tell a pretty woman anything. I would swear to her I was the greatest, wisest, faithfulest of men, if I thought she would believe me. I would brave it out with her I was the pope of Rome, or the Great Mogul, or even one of the Anthropophagi, if it looked as if 'twould advantage me in my suit. Nay, Ovid himself knoweth not the metamorphoses I would undergo under such circumstances. Dost think they would have no disguises? Dost think they stand upon the saying of anything with us? By this hand, I would as soon expect to find sunbeams in a snowball, as truth in a pretty woman. Ask of her if she love thee, she shall answer 'no' straight, when be sure she hath 'yes' in her heart all the time. Attempt to lay siege to her lips, she shall presently frown and seem in a monstrous to-do,

but so completely doth her nature assent to it, that do but persist for a sufficient time, and make no doubt the citadel shall surrender at discretion."

"I do believe, Dick, thou knowest very little of the matter," observed Master Shakspeare. "Thou art like to a many more I have met with, that can speak bravely of the difficultest things, but question them close of their knowledge, and they shall be proved as ignorant as a dead horse."

"None of thy dog's meat similes," exclaimed Master Burbage, as if in some disdain: "I tell thee 'tis a subject that none have studied closer than have I—I have entered into it thoroughly. I have pursued my investigations (albeit though it be a matter so exceeding profound that no one ever got to the bottom on't) as deep as have any. But tell me, Will, how did it happen that, notwithstanding of thy villany in cutting of me out, for the which I now heartily do forgive thee, thou hadst no better luck with the incomparable Joanna."

"She told me that she loved a youth for whom I entertained great friendship," replied his companion, "and thereupon did I desist of my intentions toward her out of respect to him. She did speak to me of him with marvellous earnestness; and knowing that he had such excellence as well deserved her praise, I joined with her in such commendation. But liking not the character of her behavior to me previous to this avowal, which was that of one who in appearance is indifferent to admiration, and yet doth encourage the admirer, I spoke to her upon the possible mischief of it to herself, as much as to those whose advances she allowed of; and the palpable injustice of it to my young friend, Master Francis, whom thou hast seen with me once or twice. Upon this she sought to defend herself upon the plea, that if she could without sinfulness create the happiness of others, she thought there could be no harm in so doing to ever so many. But I straightway gave her to understand that the philosophy of love be the possession of the beloved object; and assured her it was a truth beyond all dispute, that no real lover ever yet existed who did not at some time or other hope to possess his mistress."

"Spoke like an oracle, Will, as thou art," said the other.

"I said also," continued Master Shakspeare, "that one of so much beauty of person and kindliness of heart, as she seemed to be, might, without the commission of any apparent criminality, create a present pleasure of no ordinary kind among such as may be content with affectionate looks and sugared phrases—but no man that truly loveth will remain all his life so easily contented; and the present pleasure will in all likelihood be turned to a continual misery, when he finds, as find he must, 'tis all profitless and inconclusive."

"That be indisputable!" observed Master Burbage. "'Tis marvellous pleasant certainly for a pretty woman to say she loveth thee, but if that be the full extent of her love, then is her parrot to be as much envied as art thou. I'd be none of such parrots, I promise thee, Will. I would hop her perch in a twinkling."

"But more than all," continued his companion, smiling at what had dropped from the other, "I dwelt particularly on the impossibility of her creating such happiness with any honesty. The happiness that may be created at the expense of another can never be defended. Master Francis I knew had given her his exclusive affections, and he naturally looked for, and imagined himself possessed of, hers to the same extent. Any division of her love to another, I told her was not only an injustice to him, but, as the knowledge of it was very like to make him uneasy, it would decidedly be at the expense of his happiness. It so happened, that in a play of some merit Master Francis showed me on our first acquaintance, there were certain passages marvellously to the purpose on this very point, which hath since given me reason to believe he had some suspicion of her true character, and wrote it as in the nature of an expostulation, hoping she would mend. I know not whether I quite succeeded in proving to her her error; but I fear much for my young friend if she alter not speedily. I know that, though of a truly modest disposition, he may be easily moved; and as for Joanna, I think she is one of a very insatiate vanity and selfishness, and seeketh with great cunning to be admired of as many as she can with as little peril to her virtue as possible; or else she is one of those well-meaning, inconsiderate creatures who cajole themselves with the belief, that as long as they do what at the first blush appeareth no absolute harm, the greater degree of pleasure they may be able to create around them, the greater degree of good will they be enabled to produce; which, under those circumstances, is nothing better than a

robbery of one to be shared among many."

"Well, let her rob and go hang," cried Master Burbage impatiently, "I've had enough of her; and if ever I be caught going after a mercer's daughter again, tickle me with a fishhook. It hath cost me a world in moneys expended with her father in such braveries as methought would the sooner win me her love and his good will, and I have got about as much by it as I might kick my shins against without fear of a hurt. A plague on all mercers' daughters, say I; and as for that cot-quean Joanna, I have a huge suspicion her lip is like a nutmeg in a vintner's parlor—every one may have the flavor on't when he lists. She hath gone clean out of my opinion. I'll have none of her."

"That's a most magnanimous resolution of thine, Dick," said Master Shakspeare laughingly, "considering she'll have none of thee."

"By this hand, she loved me as flies love sugar!" exclaimed the other.

"As flies love pepper, thou shouldst have said, Dick," observed his companion; "for I do assure thee she acknowledged to me that she heeded thy fine compliments as a thrifty housewife does a litter of kittens she be pitching all of a lump into the next pool."

"Ha! said she so? the little villain!" cried Master Burbage. "But it matters not—I have done with her. And now attend to me, I prythee, for I have more attractive matter in hand."

"Another Joanna?" inquired Master Shakspeare maliciously.

"Another polecat!" sharply replied the other. "I tell thee, Will, I but want thy assistance to have such sport as we have not seen together this many a day."

"Surely thou wouldst seek of me no more verses?" said his companion archly.

"Verses! hang thy verses!" answered Master Burbage.

"Well, if thou wilt hang them, let it be with one of the *lines* I have been so oft obliged to borrow of thee when I came to a halt in my measure," observed the other with exceeding seriousness.

"By this light, thou art like a woman that hath left off having children—thou art past bearing," said his associate, as if in some sort of vexation. "But listen now, I prythee: thou knowest my Lords Simple and Dimple?"

"What, our Damon and Pythias? our Castor and Pollux? our David and Absalom?" asked his friend with a laugh.

"To be sure I know them. There exists not a pair of fools so well matched throughout these realms."

"Thou hast it, Will," added Master Burbage, in a like humor. "They are precious fools indeed—as innocent as lambkins, and as loving as turtles. They seem born of Folly, and twinned at a birth. I'faith they seem such sworn friends that one might as well expect to meet with but one pannier on an ass as one of these lords without the other. Now, methinks such pestilent affectations should be put down. I like them not: and doubtless 'twould be exquisite sport could we two set this Damon and Pythias by the ears so completely, that they shall not only be eager to forswear each other's company, but that there shall be so deadly a quarrel betwixt them, that they shall presently out with their tools, and appear to thrust away so nimbly, that it shall be a difficult matter to say which be the most ready to destroy the other."

"I like the humor of it vastly," replied Master Shakspeare, who seemed to enter into the jest with great spirit—"indeed 'tis exceeding well conceited. But there must be no mischief come of it."

"Mischief!" exclaimed the other, as if in some astonishment at the idea. "Nay, Will, make thy mind easy on that score. If ever they come nigh enough with their weapons to hurt each other, then am I no judge of true valor: but we will be ready to interfere in case they shall be bent upon anything deadly."

"Well, 'tis a goodly scheme," said his companion, "and I doubt not 'twill afford marvellous proper sport. But how dost mean to set about it?"

"In this way, sweet Will," replied Master Burbage. "About this time we may make sure of finding these faithful shepherds taking of their customary walk toward Finsbury Fields, discoursing in very delicate phrase of the delights of friendship. We will then be upon them. Thou shalt draw one aside and I the other, and with well asserted accounts of what one hath said and done in contempt of the other, we will move both to a monstrous furiousness."

"'Tis admirable, Dick!" cried Master Shakspeare, starting up in evident delight. "I do commend thy wit hugely, in the devising of so superlative a piece of wickedness; and, mayhap, it shall afford thee a far more exquisite pleasure than did thy aims upon the mercer's daughter."

"Hang the mercer's daughter!" ex-

claimed his companion, seemingly in some dudgeon. "By this light I would not throw away a thought on so errant a jade."

"The grapes be sour, Dick," said the other mischievously.

"Grapes! grapes, quotha!" cried Master Burbage, with a well-assumed indignation. "Yes, she shall be thought such when grapes do grow on thorns and figs on thistles."

"Oh, thou perjured piece of villany!" exclaimed Master Shakspeare, laughing very heartily. "Dost remember when thou first spoke of her to me in my lodging at the Bankside, how, in a feverish ecstasy, thou didst assert that she had an eye like Venus, a bust like Juno, and every grace that all Olympus possessed?"

"That was out of the very generosity of my disposition, I do assure thee, Will," added his companion, with as serious a face as he could put on. "Thou knowest I am ever inclined to make the best of matters at all times, let them be ever so bad; but believe me, her teeth be like park palings after a hurricane; and her nose hath an exceeding resemblance to an onion running to seed—it doth sprout up so abominably."

"Alack, that disappointed vanity should make of thee such a thorough slanderer!" cried Master Shakspeare. "If she be not as pretty a piece of womanhood as eye ever dwelt on delightedly, then know I not what is perfection in comeliness. All the harm I could say of her is, that in my thinking she is either mightily deceiving herself, or deluding others to a similar extent—mayhap, there shall be something of both when the truth cometh to be known; and I blame her only because I feel assured there will mischief happen of it either to one party or the other—like enough to all. But come along with thee, and let us after these lords."

Saying this, the two friends started off, and laughing and jesting all the way, they made for Finsbury Fields, out by Cripplegate. Here had they scarce arrived when lo! they spied my Lords Simple and Dimple very soberly a strolling together for to take the air, in the direction of the windmills; and so earnest in talk, they knew not that the two players were close upon them, endeavoring all they could not to laugh aloud; and nudging of each other on the elbow when anything fell from them which was more than ordinary ridiculous.

"Now, Simple, thou art in the wrong there," said one, as if with great seriousness. "Thou knowest I am fully two days older than art thou; therefore, if, as I before said, some tyrant should order us to be executed to the death, I would have precedency of thee, and suffer first."

"By this glove, that would I never allow!" exclaimed the other with extreme eagerness. "What, shall it be said that such a true heart as am I, should allow his friend to die before him? I tell thee, Dimple, it must not be. I will set thee such an example of friendship as shall do thee infinite good to look on; and shall be a marvel to the world ever after."

"It is for me to set the example, who am the oldest," cried Dimple, more seriously than at first. "I claim it of natural right, which will I never give up; and peradventure it shall happen as I have said, then shalt thou wonder to see how heroic I will behave myself—ay, with such a strength of soul, that the name of Dimple shall be engraved on monuments of adament unto latest posterity."

"If I let thee, then am I no true friend," replied Simple, with a more earnest eagerness. "I will have it so. I would give way to none in so vital a matter. Indeed it *must* be. Then will I astonish human nature—then"—

"Indeed it shall never be, my lord!" exclaimed the first, as if in some way nettled—"I am the elder, and if I die not first, then will I know the reason why."

"My lord, you do ill in disputing upon this," observed the other somewhat warmly. "'Tis my particular wish to suffer before you, and I will have it so."

"You be no true friend for wishing what be against my inclination, and I will not suffer it," said Dimple, as if getting into a rage.

"You be a scurvy fellow, if you say I be no true friend," replied Simple angrily.

"What caitiff! dost call me scurvy fellow?" shouted one in a very monstrous fierceness.

"My lords, this be a marvellous sight, indeed!" exclaimed Master Burbage, now breaking in upon them with as grave a face as he could assume for the occasion, and leading of Dimple on one side behind one of the windmills, whilst Master Shakspeare did the same with Simple. "Between ourselves, my lord," added he, "you do exceeding right in quarrelling with this person. He hath no proper estimation of your lordship's excellent parts. I did myself hear him

say that you had no more brains than a maggot."

"He lies in his throat!" furiously cried my Lord Dimple. "I will prove on his villanous body that I have more brains than fifty maggots."

"My Lord Simple," said Master Shakspeare very concernedly, "I think 'tis exceeding strange that you should hold acquaintance with one who hath said you are of so faint a heart, you would not draw upon a snail for fear he should run at you."

"Oh! the pitiful traitor!" shouted my Lord Simple in a tearing passion. "By this glove, there liveth not on this earth the snail that I am afeard of."

"See! he is going to draw upon you, my lord!" said Master Burbage. "I pray you out with your weapon quick, or he shall take you unawares, and mayhap, give you a mortal wound."

"Prepare you, my lord, quickly," cried Master Shakspeare. "He hath his weapon out, and cometh with deadly mischief in his eyes."

"Thou villain, Dimple!"

"Thou villain, Simple!" shouted both at the same moment of time, as they came furiously on with their drawn weapons and began a thrusting at each other, though, without doubt, at a wonderful respectful distance, after as fierce a fashion as might be possible to behold. But this continued not for long—for suddenly they dropped the points of their rapiers, upon hearing of such a burst of laughter as startled them exceedingly, and looking round, observed Master Burbage a holding of his sides, and Master Shakspeare with his hand before his mouth. The two lords, upon this, looked as if they knew not what to make of it.

"Didst say I had no more brains than a maggot, my lord?" inquired Dimple, as if wonderfully moved.

"By this glove, no," replied Simple, with exceeding gravity. "For, if thou hadst no more brains than half a maggot, it be not the part of such a true heart as am I, to say it of his friend. But didst thou assert I was of so faint a heart, I would not draw upon a snail for fear he should run at me?"

"By all true friendship, never asserted I aught of the kind," answered the first with a monstrous seriousness. "For, if thou wouldst not draw upon half a snail, I would assert it to none, because I could never do so unfriendly a thing."

"These players be making fools of us," whispered the other as he put up his weapon. "Let us away from them."

"They be low fellows, that's a sure thing," replied his friend as he sheathed his weapon. "So we'll e'en have none of their villanous company." Upon this both went off together as quick as they might; and in no way relishing the mirth that was so loudly shouted from behind them.

"Oh! Dick, Dick!" exclaimed Master Shakspeare, as seriously as he could, "thou hast spoiled the most exquisite sport: 'tis a thousand pities thou shouldst have broken out into a laugh."

"Laugh!" cried Master Burbage, still holding of his sides; "'twould have made a man laugh that had been dead this seven year. Never saw I so rare a sight! they skipped about like two fleas on a bolster! O' my life, 'twould be no easy matter to say which was the most afraid of the two. And then the terrible fierceness of their looks, and the awful manner in which they made their thrusts, compared with the monstrous safe distance at which they kept from the point of each other's weapon, made me roar again. By this hand, I would not have missed so fine a jest for half my share of the playhouse."

"But who have we here?" said his friend, pointing to a man who was making up to them, wearing at his side a rapier of extraordinary length.

"I'faith he taketh care he may be known by a goodly weapon, at least," observed the other; "but see, here come two others across the fields, from t'other side."

"And beyond all doubt one of them is my young friend, Master Francis," exclaimed Master Shakspeare.

The person first alluded to, whom the courteous reader will have no great difficulty in recognising, as soon as he came nigh unto the two players, stopped, placing his right foot a little forward, one arm stretched out, and the other a-kimbo, as was usual with him, and thus addressed them:—

> "Look on, great princes! for 'tis I who come
> To rend the world with adamantine groans,
> And suck sweet horror from the empty air.
> Then let some holy trance convey my thoughts
> Up to the palace of th' empyreal heaven,
> That this my life may be as short to me
> As are the days of sweet Zenocrate."

Master Burbage, upon this speech, did nudge his companion on the elbow, and look as if he were marvellously inclined for another laugh.

"Attend not to him, I pray your wor-

ship," shouted Harry Daring, as he, with Master Francis, hastily approached the spot, cudgel in hand; "there be no more truth in him than you shall find in an empty walnut."

"Casane and Theridamas, to arms!"

now cried Ralph Goshawk, in exactly the same posture as he had used at first:—

"Raise, cavalleros higher than the clouds,
And with the cannon break the frame of heaven;
Batter the shining palace of the sun,
And shiver all the starry firmament."

"I am right glad to see you, Master Francis," said Master Shakspeare, shaking of his young friend heartily by the hand; "but I pray you tell me what all this may mean."

"Please your worship, that will I tell you straight," said Harry Daring, as soon as he heard the question. "You must know that this be my particular friend, Master Francis, who be as sweet a gentleman as you shall find anywhere, and I will undertake to prove it with any weapon, against all comers; and he, as be but proper for one in his condition, happened for to look with a sort of affectionateness upon a comely wench;—albeit I of late have had some suspicion her virtue be somewhat out at elbows; when up cometh this fellow, who, for all he may appear so bounceable, be nothing more than a rubbishing haberdasher; and taketh the opportunity, to use some devilish potion or another, for the ruin of my friend's mistress,—which I hugely suspect he hath accomplished;—thereupon Master Francis sendeth him a challenge by me purposing here to meet him, and punish him for his villany; upon the which he breaketh out into such language as would make a dog vomit to hear of, were he within a mile of it, and straightway calleth him 'Zenocrate.' Upon the which, I, taking it to be some vile name it was not proper for me to put up with, did on the instant fetch the pitiful villain such a punch under his ribs, that it made him cry out like a scalded pig: and here have I brought my true friend to do him battle, as becometh a gentleman who hath received so deadly an offence as to have his mistress ruined away from him, and then called such a horrid name as Zenocrate."

"Am I to gather from this that you intend to fight this person?" asked Master Shakspeare.

"I am here for that purpose," replied Master Francis.

"Well, I will at least see that you have fair play," said his friend; "but methinks 'tis not honest of him to come with so monstrous a weapon."

"If it please you, sir, to let me fight the villain instead of my friend, I would thank you for it," observed Harry Daring, earnestly. "I care not for his monstrous weapon, I promise you. Nay, by Gog and Magog, if I am not hindered, I will undertake to beat him out of the field with this my cudgel."

"Harry, I have told thee before, he must be left to me," replied Master Francis determinedly.

"But you must fight with equal weapons, my masters," cried Master Burbage; "'tis not fair, Master Haberdasher, to come to the field with a thing at your side long enough for the devil's toothpick."

"Art not ashamed to bring such a villanous tool before gentlemen of worship?" inquired Harry Daring, flourishing of his cudgel before Ralph Goshawk, as if he did itch to let fly at him.

"What daring god torments my body thus,
And seeks to conquer mighty Tamburlane?"

answered the other as he retreated a little way out of the reach of the stick.

"I pray you, sir, let him keep his weapon, and I will have at him with mine," said the youth, gallantly drawing of his rapier. Seeing this, Ralph Goshawk, with a fierce swaggering air, drew from its scabbard the two-handed sword he carried; which in truth had a blade of prodigious length; and he being much stouter built than his opponent, and looking as if he were a thorough master of fence, did seem unto Master Shakspeare and Master Burbage a very formidable fellow.

"Come, let us march against the powers of heav'n,
And set black streamers in the firmament,
To signify the slaughter of the gods!"

"I tell thee what, thou detestable fustian rogue," here exclaimed Harry Daring to Ralph Goshawk, "slaughter the gods and welcome, for they be fellows I know not of, and therefore care not for; but if thou shouldst hurt but a hair of my friend's head, I'll cudgel thee to death ere thou hast lived another minute." Upon hearing of this the other cried out,—

"Villain, away, and hie thee to the field;
I and mine army come, to load thy back
With souls of thousand mangled carcases."

and thereupon he advanced toward Master Francis, flourishing of his long rapier about, in a manner that made his friends

emble for his safety. But the youth aited, with his weapon upon guard, atching of the haberdasher's move- ients with a cautious eye, and presenting bold front to him as he came, slashing way, now on this side, and now on the ther. This had remained for some few oments, when as if Ralph Goshawk ad calculated upon frightening his rival, y his terrible swagger and dangerous eapon, and was himself in fear of the outh's courageous bearing and light harp rapier, his looks began to lose much of their fierceness; his impudence seemed about to forsake him; and ob- serving Master Francis draw back his arm, as if about to make a thrust, with a wonderful frightened aspect, he suddenly put his sword under his arm, and took to his heels as fast as they could carry him along.

"I'll be hanged if thou shalt escape without a cudgelling," cried Harry Dar- ing; and while the others were laughing famously at the fellow's cowardice, the barber's apprentice pursued the runaway haberdasher with all the speed he was master of. Ralph Goshawk took but one look behind him, and finding that he was followed by the little desperate fellow who had hit him so sore a punch in the ribs, he seemed to take wings and fly, he was so quickly out of sight.

"And, if 'tis a fair question, I pray you tell me who is this pretty piece of frailty, for whom you have so ably frightened this hero out of the field?" asked Master Shakspeare of his young friend, as soon as their mirth had subsided a little.

"By this hand, 'twas almost as good a jest as that we had of the two lords!" exclaimed Master Burbage, who appeared to have taken it in huge delight.

"Oh! she be of a very delicate come- liness," replied Harry Daring, as he re- turned out of breath from his bootless chase. "And she be called Joanna, the mercer's daughter in Eastcheap."

"Joanna!" cried both the players in the same breath, as if marvelling exceedingly.

"That be her name beyond all doubt," added the barber-chirurgeon's appren- tice; and Master Francis, looking ex- ceedingly disturbed, said nothing.

"Will!" said Master Burbage, as he came up close to his friend, with a mighty serious countenance.

"What, Dick?" answered the other.

Master Burbage stooped his head a lit- tle and whispered into the other's ear, with all the emphasis he could put into the words, "*The grapes be sour!*"

CHAPTER XVII.

Great miracle of constancy! my miseries
Were never bankrupt of their confidence
In worst afflictions, till this—now I feel them.
Report, and thy deserts, thou best of creatures,
Might to eternity have stood a pattern
For every virtuous wife, without this conquest.
Thou hast outdone belief: yet may their ruin
In after marriages be never pitied,
To whom thy story shall appear a fable. FORD.

SIR WALTER RALEIGH sat at table, on which were many books and papers, in a small chamber in the Tower; which, certes, was properly furnished enough though everything therein was of an ex- ceeding antique fashion: and the beauti- ful Dame Elizabeth, now looking with a very matronly dignity, sat as near as might be opposite to him, working of a baby's cap, whilst close by her side was a cradle, in which slept a marvellous pretty infant. Now she would take her eyes from her work and fix them on the slumbering child with such sweet and smiling looks, as showed her heart was delighted with what she gazed on; and anon she would turn them to where sat her husband, leaning of his head on his hand over a large book he seemed to be a studying of so intently that he could regard naught else; and there was then so tender a solicitude in her eyes as was quite moving to see. She seemed as though she would have spoke, and yet refrained from it for fear of disturbing him in his studies. Again she continued at her work, but not without stealing of an occasional glance at the babe, or at Sir Walter. Yet was there ever a singu- lar difference in the expression of her look to each. She still regarded her child with a fond and truly delicate smile, whilst upon her husband her gaze fell with an increasing melancholy, which at last became exceeding pathetic. It so happened that Sir Walter Raleigh, turn- ing over a leaf, raised his head, and noticed the moving sadness of her looks.

"What makes thee look so woful, Bess?" inquired he affectionately.

"Woful!—Surely I look not woful, dear Walter?" she replied as if with an assumed cheerfulness. "I am content— I lack nothing. Thou art everything I could wish. For what should I look woful then? Indeed thou must have mistaken my countenance hugely, if thou hast gathered from it I be in any way out of heart."

"In truth, sweetest, thou hadst but now so piteous a look that I was moved at it," said he.

"Then was it a false look, dear Walter; and therefore regard it not, I prythee!" exclaimed his beautiful wife very earnestly. "Let it not move thee at all, for it must have been a villanous deceitful look if it hath given thee a moment's uneasiness."

"I have never yet seen aught in thee deceitful, dear Bess," observed Sir Walter. "Therefore am I now loath to believe that thou couldst have to do with such. Have I said or done any such thing as might have made thee sad?"

"Nay, on my life, thou hast been to me the kindest best creature fond woman ever loved!" replied Dame Elizabeth with great eagerness. "I am not sad at all, dear Walter. I'faith! methinks I should be more merry than sad, seeing what bountiful good fortune is mine. Thou art with me. The queen might have done me such ill office as to have kept us separate; yet hath she graciously allowed me the extreme happiness of being with thee. Then why should I be sad! Looked I less cheerful than ordinary, mayhap it was for fear such deep study as thou dost fall into may do thy health some hurt."

"Fear not, sweet heart," said he, with a most endearing smile. "There dwelleth such excellent good philosophy in these books, that the perusing of them maketh me forget I am here cribbed within stone walls a doing of nothing of any advantage to the world; but if it doth now afflict thee to see me so intent upon such labors, I will for the present leave them, and study a more alluring lesson—which is no other than thee, dear Bess."

"Prythee do not, dear Walter!" exclaimed she very fondly. "If these books are such as have taught thee to become so brave of soul, so good, so noble, so kind and generous as thou art—I would on no account have thee leave such excellent studies to regard one who can teach thee no one thing of any usefulness. But I like not to hear thee say that thou art doing of nothing of advantage to the world; for art thou not constantly writing upon such matters as I doubt not must be of great profit to all, and in after times will make thee as exceeding famous, as thou well deservest to be?"

"'Twould be a right wonderful comfort could I think so," observed Sir Walter.

"Then such shouldst thou ever think," she replied. "I know that 'tis something too much to expect of thee to show a cheerful heart at all times, when I reflect to what a doleful strait thy goodness to me hath brought thee to, the thought of which is enough, methinks, to make the most patient nature feel vast discomfort upon occasion: yet well assured am I that, whether thou art within stone walls, a powerless prisoner—or aboard of a goodly ship, the leader of a gallant armament—thy noble mind would ever be devising of some greatness whereof all mankind might receive benefit. If thou art melancholy let me sing to thee, dear Walter, and perchance thou shalt find some pleasure in it."

"Indeed, thy singing is of so sweet a sort that my spirit is enraptured when I hear thee," said he. "Sing, dear Bess! I do feel somewhat weary. 'Tis of little moment that thy virginals be not at hand; for thy voice doth discourse such delicate music as requireth no accompaniment to set it off."

Then placing of her work in her lap she turned upon him a look full of most exquisite devotedness, and with such tuneful notes as were a marvel to hear, she presently did commence the following words:—

"Prythee, sweetheart! be not so sad,
Else shall I think thou lov'st me not;
For he that loves to love is glad,
And loving, hath all else forgot.
If that the Past doth seem unkind,
I will a better Present find:
If Present things should bring annoy,
I'll make thy Future brim with joy.

"If friends to thee have proved untrue,
I will be all they should have been;
If Fortune frown upon thy view,
I'll give the smiles thou shouldst have seen:
Thou shalt not want for anything
That she who loveth thee can bring;
And love makes all things to be had:
Prythee, sweetheart! be not so sad."

"Truly a simple ditty and a kind, Bess!" exclaimed Sir Walter Raleigh, who had listened with evident delight both to the singer and the song. "I'faith!—it almost maketh me think that to be in a cage with so sweet a bird as art thou, must needs be better than to have the freedom of the whole world, and lack the hearing of so brave a songster."

"I care not what it maketh thee think, Walter," replied Dame Elizabeth affectionately; "so that thou canst be in any way the happier for it: and as for thy freedom, I do believe thou canst acquire it at very slight pains."

"Indeed!" cried he, as if in some surprise. "'Tis strange I knew it not. Believe me, I would not stay here an instant longer than I could help."

"Then why not seek to move the queen to thy pardon?" she asked.

"Because I know 'twould avail me nothing with her," he replied. "My enemies are numerous and powerful, and would be on the watch to overthrow any attempt I might make for my liberation; for they know full well 'tis to their advantage to keep me where I am; and having constant access to the presence, could easily increase the queen's wrath against me."

"That will I never believe, dear Walter," said the devoted woman. "Her majesty hath had considerable profit out of the galleon that was taken at the Azores, hath she not?"

"Sir John Hawkins hath writ me word," added Sir Walter, "that, in consequence of the villanous pilfering of some of the men, the Madre de Dios, on examination, fell very far short of its estimate: and of this, although the queen had but one of her ships present, she hath seized upon as great a share as if she had been at more than one half the trouble and charges of the expedition."

"The possessing of so much treasure through thy means will assuredly make her somewhat favorably disposed toward thee," she observed; "and that the greatness of her rage hath by this time much abated I make no manner of doubt. This being the case, dear Walter, as it needs must be; and I—knowing her to be one with whom some pretty adulation will do anything, so that there be enough of it—would wager mine existence that if thou wouldst but contrive some pleasant conceit, in which it shall appear that thou art gone distracted because of the impossibility of seeing her, and season it with such pretty tropes as thou knowest she most affects, thou shalt have thy liberty in a presently."

"I like it not, dear Bess," replied her husband, as if he entertained the proposal with some distaste. "I have played the courtier's and the lover's part with her already to such an extreme, that it made her all the more enraged against me when she discovered my marriage with thee. She must be exceeding credulous if she would believe anything of the kind of me now. Besides, it is a fashion that however oft I may have fallen into, I liked never; and at the present time am more than ever disinclined to."

"That ought thou not to hold in any sort of consideration, dear Walter," she answered quickly. "Remember that she hath made such flattery the common language, without which none who seek her favor can expect to get aught of her; and thou art no more to blame in using of such means than art thou for wearing of a doublet of a certain make: for both are the court fashion, which every one must adopt who would be in good esteem with his sovereign. And who can be so worthy of such estimation as art thou? In truth, if thy merit were properly rewarded thou shouldst then have the highest place there, and take precedence of all. As for her indignation in finding out that thou hast been playing of the lover to her whilst thou were acting it more truly to me, heed it not. In the first place, the blame must be entirely her own: for when a woman entertaineth a lover of whose affection she hath good knowledge that it can be naught but words, she is but rightly served when he leaveth her for the enjoyment of a more sincere and more profitable passion. And in the next place, the queen hath so excessive a vanity, that there be nothing so preposterous told her of the power of her beauty she will not believe. Do but say that I have been the party to blame—and in truth, dear Walter, all the censure should be mine—and assert with a sufficient show of sincerity that none but her can be mistress of thy affections, and I make no manner of doubt that she would presently take thee into more favor than ever."

"Nay, if ever I say a word in censure of one who hath shown to me so true a heart shall I be the basest wretch that lives!" exclaimed Sir Walter.

"Indeed I should think of thee all the better for it," replied she very earnestly. "Of a truth, dear Walter, I can know no true pleasure till I see thee in the posession of such greatness as thy noble heart deserves. For me thou hast sacrificed all thy well-earned honors; and knowing this, it can not be possible I should feel any easiness of heart till they have been restored to thee. As for me, I am nothing but what thy infinite goodness hath made me; and thou couldst say no censure, however great it might be, that my demerits have not called for. Prythee! —do it, dear Walter."

"Never!" cried her husband with a very sincere earnestness. "I will never be brought to say aught of thee but that thou art the kindest, truest, and best of wives, and the very fairest, sweetest, and dearest of women."

"O' my life, thou thinkest a vast deal too kindly of me!" said the affectionate

wife; and then putting aside her work, rising from her chair, and taking him by the hand, she led him to the cradle, where, resting of her arm fondly upon his shoulder, she did address him with more seriousness, as she pointed to the sleeping child. "Dear Walter! think of that boy. He is now, as thou seest, as lovely an infant as ever fond mother was blest withal; but when he cometh to riper years, what poor hap must be his if he come only to succeed to the ruined fortunes of a disgraced father!—and how can he properly reverence that parent, who, having it in his power by means of a few idle words to gain the restoration of his own honors, and leave them in costly legacy to his child, chose rather to remain in discredit with the world, and to leave his son no better inheritance than the remembrance of his father's misfortunes. See, Walter! he openeth his little rose-buds of lips, and smileth on thee! He pleads with his mother that thou wilt have more heed of thyself and of him. Now his eyes unclose and look upon thee like glimpses of heaven. Wilt thou deny him? And now he stretcheth forth his little arms to implore thee to such an act of justice. *Canst* thou deny him?"

"Indeed, dear Bess," said he, looking fondly upon her—"thou hast proved thyself so excellent an advocate, that I shall never attempt after this to argue a cause against thee. I will promise thee to use my best endeavors with the queen; but as for saying aught of thy unworthiness, it is a thing of which I am so entirely ignorant, and is a theme for which I have so little inclination, that I do feel assured I should break down in the very smallest attempt. But I must take up this thy admirable little assistant in thy pleading, for in truth he appeareth as if he would not rest where he is." Thereupon Sir Walter did take the babe into his arms, and fondle him, and toss him up, in the which the little fellow seemed to find huge delight, for he crowed and clapped his hands famously; while Dame Elizabeth stood close by, watching of the two as if she knew not which she loved the best.

"I'faith, the rogue seems to like it, methinks!" exclaimed Sir Walter, as he kept throwing the child up in his arms; and it was difficult to say which seemed the most gratified of the two.

"Like it! to be sure he likes it, Walter," replied his beautiful wife. "And when he careth not to be caressed and dandled by so good a father, 'tis like enough I shall fall out with him."

"What, canst talk of falling out with so handsome a babe?" asked Raleigh, seemingly in some astonishment; and gazing upon the smiling infant as he held it before him, added: "There are its mother's eyes, of a surety!"

"Nay, Walter," said she, with an exceeding affectionate smile; "if he be not every bit of him like thee, then am I but an indifferent judge of a resemblance."

"Out on thee for a flatterer," exclaimed her husband playfully.

"Well, if thou wilt not acknowledge what all be ready to swear to, it be so manifest, thou shalt have none of him," replied the devoted woman, coming as if to take him away. "So hand him over to me, I prythee."

"Be assured I will do nothing of the kind," said Sir Walter, as he caught the child close to his breast. "He is mine; I have him, and will keep him. Get thee gone, good woman, thou hast had nothing to do with him, and therefore art not at all a proper creature to trust him with."

"Oh, shame on thee, for saying so," answered Dame Elizabeth, laughingly. "But I must have him, Walter—his mouth is on the silver buttons of thy doublet, and he will put thee in a most woful slobber."

"Better to spoil my doublet than lose my boy!" cried he; and then sportively made off with him, as if he would give him up on no account, while his beautiful wife kept following them round the room with her arms stretched out, begging to have the child. Presently, the little fellow spying of his mother, put out his arms likewise, and soon after cried to be taken.

"'Tis nothing else but a conspiracy," observed Sir Walter, as he gave the boy into his mother's arms. "He assists thee in everything. I like not being opposed to so unnatural a combination; so I will to my books again."

Then he returned to his chair, and Dame Elizabeth did go to hers with the infant in her arms, who was soon very quietly enjoying of himself after such a fashion as seemed to be wonderfully pleasant to him. This continued for some short time, when Sir Walter Raleigh looked up and said—

"Hast seen anything of Stephen?"

"He hath been here this morning," replied his wife, "with a letter from Alice, who writes me in a most merry vein, as

if for the enlivening of my spirits. I have it here, if thou wilt read it." And then she offered to him the letter.

"If there be no secret matter unlawful for husband to look into, I should like, infinitely, to see what the merry wench hath to say for herself," observed Sir Walter, as he took the letter into his hand.

"I can never have any secrets from thee, dear Walter," answered Dame Elizabeth; and, upon this, her husband did open and read the letter, which proceeded to this effect:—

"'SWEET Coz: While uncle is amusing of himself by cudgelling of Peter, I will seek entertainment for you in cudgelling of my brains. I am willed to do this by Sir Nicholas, who thinketh you shall be all the better for some intelligence of home; yet I find no lack of mine own inclination in it, I do assure you, for there is nothing in which I take such singular pleasure, as in affording of some comfort to my excellent good Bess. But, first of all, I know 'tis necessary, if I seek to be loved of you, I should inquire concerning of that man-animal, his worship, your husband; the which I now do with exceeding courtesy, thinking it a thousand pities he should be the queen's prisoner, when I am oft left to the small profit of counting of my fingers for lack of having him to teaze.'

"The little villain!" exclaimed Sir Walter with a smile, when he came to the perusing of this passage; then continued.

"'I like him hugely—just as mischievous boys like cats, old women, and bonfires—for the sport they afford.'

"Oh the impudent baggage!" cried he.

"'But, as you have told me, that he is the very best, and kindest of creatures to you, dear Bess, for his sake will I think well of all man-animals—if I can.'

"There is nothing I should so much delight in, as seeing her ladyship desperately in love," observed Raleigh. "I'-faith, 'twould be a delectable revenge."

"I doubt not her time will come," said Dame Elizabeth. After which her husband did proceed.

"'It must be known unto you that, on the report of the fortune Aunt Dorothy left me, I have got me a famous set of lovers. Oh, 'twould be a comfort to your heart to behold what goodly fools they be. By my troth, there shall be no occasion for any of them to wear motley—they may be known for such as they are let them wear what they list. First of these, for methinks he should have precedence, being out of all contradiction, the greatest wittol of the lot, there cometh Sir Narcissus Wrinkles. Hast ever been at table where there hath been mutton dressed lamb fashion? If so, then shall you have some notion of Sir Narcissus Wrinkles. He is nothing else than a poor old wether that would needs pass himself off for as innocent a lambkin as ever frisked in a meadow. Yet is he so marvellous stiff in the hams, that when I drop my fan, which I do on the purpose pretty oft, it taketh him a monstrous space of time before he can stoop to lay hold of it, and then he presenteth it to me with his hand on his heart, swearing by Cerberus, he would find infinite pleasure to fetch and carry for me like a very spaniel; and all the whilst he looks as if he had broken his back, and hath scarlet enough in his face for the making of an old woman's cloak. Then he hath such oaths as be a marvel to hear. Mayhap, if you heard him, you should presently affirm that he was nothing better than an ancient pagan dug out of the earth after a sleep of some centuries, for he swears by all the heathen gods and goddesses.

"'He skips after me, as perchance he shall fancy, like a mountain kid; but as it seemeth to me in much more resemblance of its venerable grandfather; and he looketh upon my face till his eyes water, and sighs heavily enough, I warrant you; but though he would have me take such signs for love, I do very affectionately tell him I grieve that his eyes should be so weak, and that he should be troubled with so pitiful an asthma. Upon this 'tis exquisite sport to see how bravely he ventureth to swear he hath such excellent vision, he can read print so small others can in no way make out, and that his constitution be of so fine a character, he knoweth not what illness means—and to this he hath the unblushing impudency to add, that he is so sound of limb, and so active withal, that he doubts not when, he shall be forty, he shall be as young as is another at thirty or less. Now, think of his saying this, when he is as like to see any more fifties as am I to marry him!

"'After him cometh my Lord Wiseacre, a young coxcomb of a fellow, who looketh as grave as is a death's head upon a tombstone, and seemeth as sanctimonious as an alderman saying of grace. He seeketh to be a wooing of me with the laws of a graybeard, and talketh of

his experience with so solemn an air, that I can scarce help laughing in his boyish countenance. Then he hath so pragmatical a humor with him, that he liketh not to see anything which doth not assort with the very monstrousness of his own gravity, and this profound conceit he carrieth to such an extreme, that if any do but attempt to jest in his presence, he shall look as solemn as one with the toothache, and at the breaking out of a laugh he shall appear as if he should swoon on the instant. I do assure you, Bess, you would wonder mightily were you to see us two. If he look serious, I look grave—if he look grave, I look solemn—if he look solemn, I look stern—if he accost me in saws, I answer him in proverbs—and if he lament the frivolity of youth, I sigh for one who hath the experience of Methusalem. I believe the varlet maketh sure of me for this, yet will I show him such a change as shall incline him the rather to wed with the parish pump.

"'The next is Master Aniseed—one who seemeth but lately to have exchanged the grub for the butterfly. His phrases, whereof he hath a goodly assortment, he ever and anon mingles with some of a coarser quality, that plain enough betray him to have been no gentleman born; yet in his attiring is he as fine an insect as ever fluttered in silk and satin; the which fabrics, however, he weareth not with that becomingness that would prove him to be properly used to such. What he hath been I know not, yet will I strive to find it out; for methinks I shall have some sport in the finding. Already I do enjoy very pretty pastime in the exceeding daintiness of his speech, when he hath discourse with me, it seemeth so all of a piece with his doublet, which be ever of the delicatest hue or finest fabric. He can not talk of the smallest matter without dressing it up in the courtliest terms. If he ask after my health, it shall be in so nice a phrase that one who heard him would think me to be some marvellous fragile being or another, that requireth to be wrapt up in lavender, and handled as tenderly as a sparrow's egg; and if he bid me good day, it shall be after so embroidered a fashion as a mercer would speak of his choicest goods.

"'After him I have Dr. Bashful, a young divine, who can not look at me without blushing; and if he offereth me his hand when he approacheth me, 'tis after such a sort as if he thought I should bite him. He trembleth terribly when I speak to him; and if I ask of him to take wine, he shall contradict himself half a dozen times before he maketh up his mind whether to take it or leave it alone. He is so entertaining a companion that he will sit by me a whole hour as dumb as a post, and then, on a sudden, ask of me what I think of the fathers. Although he seemeth to love me, he would as soon dare lay hold of my hand whilst we sit together, as take a mad dog by the tail: and although I doubt not he likes nothing as well as to gaze on my face, he can only have courage to steal a look at me when I be a turning another way. Then he seemeth continually intent upon the making of some blunder. He be ever upsetting of something in his haste to show me some courtesy. He will destroy everything breakable he shall lay his hands on—for he will either grip it so firm that it shall smash in his hands, or hold it so tremblingly that it shall fall to pieces at his feet. Mayhap at dinner he shall pay his court to me by knocking off a tankard of ale into my lap, and then, in his hurry to repair the mischief, he shall upset a bowl of soup into his own. If he be watched, he shall be found saucing of his pudding with catsup; and, anon, drinking of the vinegar for wine. Then, when he discovereth his mistake he grins like a monkey over a bone, and sets to a blushing till his face outrivalleth the crimson of a poppy in a cornfield. Oh, what goodly fools these man-animals be! But were I to describe to you every one of the worshipful set by which I am environed, methinks 'twould tire your patience wonderfully, therefore will I wait till you can have sight of them for yourself; the which I am exceeding hopeful will not be long first, for there is none I so much desire to see as my own sweet Bess.

"'Uncle hath been in excellent good health, but though I do all I can to make him merry, I know that he doth miss you oft. I have heard say that the queen is going the progress, and perchance she may be in so gracious a mood as to forgive her prisoners and let them have their liberty. I would she could be brought to it. But keep a good heart, and I doubt not matters will go right enough soon.

"'From your loving cousin,

"ALICE THROCKMORTON.'

"I'faith, if Alice had such lovers, I doubt not she will have famous sport of them," observed Sir Walter Raleigh, as he finished the letter. "Some of them I know, and therefore can I safely say she hath hit them off to a nicety. I will lay

a wager upon it that she will play them such tricks out of her infinite genius for mischief, that they shall be right glad to get themselves out of her way."

"'Tis a thousand pities she meets not with some of more likely sort," said Dame Elizabeth. After this there was a pause of some few minutes.

"I marvel much at not seeing of Master Francis," exclaimed her husband, at last. "He is not wont to make such long stays. I hope nothing amiss hath happened to him."

"In honest truth, I hope so too," added his fair companion, "for he seemeth to serve thee so lovingly, and with so modest a spirit. Methinks he doth look exceedingly unhappy."

"I do believe his mind is ill at ease," replied Sir Walter. "There existeth some obscurity in his birth which he doth allow to prey on his sensitive spirit more, I think, than the matter calls for. Without doubt, he is a youth of admirable good qualities; yet hath he his faults nevertheless. He is oft too apt to draw conclusions which the premises will scarce warrant: this is, however, a natural error at his time of life, and one that time will correct. I have great hopes of him."

Having said this, he did again return to his books, and Dame Elizabeth continued nursing of her babe, who seemed at it to crow and laugh so prettily, that Sir Walter did more than once raise his head and smilingly observe him; and mayhap would call to him in such sort of prattle as parents do usually adopt on the like occasions. Presently there was heard a knocking at the door, and admittance being allowed, in walked Master Francis, with a very gentlemanly courteousness, yet looking as pale and melancholy as ever.

"I have been detained, Sir Walter, upon certain of mine own affairs that did require instant attention, else had I been here earlier," observed the young secretary.

"It matters not," replied his patron, kindly. "But now sit you down, Master Francis. I would have some talk with you."

The youth, at this request, put his hat on one side, and sat himself down near the table.

"Hast ever considered the moral effects of solitude upon the heart?" inquired Raleigh, after a little while.

"Methinks its tendency must needs be of a very soothing kind," replied the other modestly, "yet, save the impressions I have got of books, know I but little of the matter. I have heard of divers philosophers and many godly eremites, who, by retiring from the cares of the busy world, have acquired a marvellous wisdom and a right notable holiness. Nay, it hath been writ in credible histories, that men used to, and moving in the restless turmoil of political governments and military avocations, have found wonderful comfort from the enjoyment of a perfect solitariness. It hath been said of Pericles, as an example among many such famous lawgivers and statesmen, that when he entertained in his mind any great object, the which, peradventure, might be for the right governing of the Athenian people, he would refrain from all social feastings, and every pleasure he was wont to delight in whatsoever, and, as much alone as might be possible to him, give himself up to the perfect consideration of the question. As far as I may be capable of judging, this seemeth a truly excellent good plan. Out of no small number of notable commanders, Scipio Africanus, the Roman, and Epaminondas, the Theban general, had a like passion for retirement, and, doubtless, found profit in it. And of the learned and pious is there so great a number who have lauded its advantages, as is almost impossible for me to name."

"And from their report you do consider that solitariness is to be recommended?" said his patron, inquiringly.

"It seemeth so to me," answered the youth.

"Believe me, 'tis a great error," observed Sir Walter. "Of all things contained within this infinite world that have powers and offices over man, you shall find nothing so pernicious and unnatural as this same solitude. That it be pernicious, is on the face of it, for it doth rob society of a member, whose duty it should be to labor for the rest as much as in him lieth. As you shall see in a hive of bees, or in a community of ants, there be none that go into holes and corners, shutting of themselves up from all fellowship, and working only for their own gratifications; so ought it to be in the common hive of the world. 'Tis sociality that createth the sweet honey of life, to wit, philanthropy; and he who is active in doing of good amongst his fellows, is the industrious ant, that ever storeth up grain for the general use. He who findeth enjoyment in solitariness, can not help but be selfish in his

nature; for it requireth of a man to concentrate all his affections upon himself ere he can take any pleasure in it. That 'tis unnatural, is full as evident: for nature hath made us all one universal brotherhood, for the helping of each other, for the pleasure of each other, and for the teaching of each other, by such exemplary doings as may be profitable in the following. For one to get away from the rest, and keep himself in secresy, and labor in loneliness he shall be accounted a deserter from his colors, the defence of which he hath abandoned to save himself; and deserveth no better treatment than to be shot for the acting of such an infamous cowardice.

"As for what you have said of Pericles and others, in no instance must such be brought forward as examples of solitude, else with as much show of truth it may be said of me because I have oft retired unto the privacy of my study that I might not be disturbed in my contemplations, that I did it for no other end than to gratify a desire for a like thing. I would take it upon me to say, that he who maketh it a practice to live out of the world, is in no way worthy to live in it."

"And yet I have found it asserted, both of philosophers and divines," observed Master Francis, "that solitude doth afford excellent opportunity for a man to study *himself*, without a proper knowledge of which, he shall be considered exceeding ignorant."

"Better be ignorant in one thing than useless in all," answered his patron. "If a man having only one book of his own, and that mayhap of no great value, goeth into a goodly library where there shall be volumes of every sort out of all number, whereof he may find admirable entertainment when he lists by perusing them, still keepeth poring over his own book, what knowledge think you he would get by it?"

"It could not help being but little, especially when brought into some comparison with what he might have had," said the youth.

"I'faith you could not have answered me more in accordance with what I expected of you," added his patron. "Like unto that man is he who goeth away from the numberless natures around him, where doubtless he shall find an exhaustless stock of learning ever at his hand, to creep into some desert place or another, with nothing to study from but himself, the which I do hugely suspect would turn out to be a very sorry volume. Such a one must needs be a fool all his life—ay, though he thumb his book till he knoweth it every bit by heart: and he shall be a doing of no more good by it, than if he had been dead and buried a hundred years."

"May I ask of you then how cometh it that there hath been such store of learned books and pious discourses writ in solitude, from which surely the world hath been the gainer?" asked his secretary.

"It must be proved that they are the result of solitariness, ere solitariness should have the praise of them," replied Sir Walter. "It may perchance hap that they were writ in retirement, yet are they the result of much previous study among men. Doubtless there are such matters of science as perfect abstraction from all things else shall greatly aavance the knowledge of; and this abstractedness passeth among the many for the love of solitude, yet of that selfishness which solitude engenders hath it nothing; for the man of science careth as little for his own person as for all other things, and, like Archimedes, would allow himself to be slaughtered in the working of a problem, than have the slightest care for his safety. Nor is the solitude of out-of-the-way places a thing for them to heed, when they shall be as much alone in the most populous city as in the desertest spot that can be found. Surely such books as I may chance to write in this my imprisonment, ought in no way to be attributable to solitude, when it is certain I would have writ the same at Durham house had I enjoyed the like leisure. Nor is this to be considered a solitude at all; for I do not confine my studies unto myself, but look, as well I may, into the natures of all with whom I can get discourse: then ought you to be cautious of believing that such books, to the which you have made allusion, because they were produced in some secludedness, were writ otherwise than from a necessity in the putting up with such a place, or in some advantage it giveth to the perfect contemplation of the subject writ upon."

"Then it seemeth to me you have no opinion of the efficacy of seclusion upon human nature?" remarked the youth.

"Entire seclusion methinks is entire foolishness," answered his patron. "Occasional meditation in privacy may be so far beneficial as to give a greater zest to the right humanizing pleasures of social intercourse when taken to again; but se-

clusiveness is exclusiveness, it shutteth the breast against all—perchance with no great loss to the world, for I doubt not on examining the hearts of such they should be found exceeding hollow."

"From this, if I understand aright, monasteries, nunneries, and institutions of the like sort, which seemed framed for the express purpose of providing opportunity for meditation, in your judgment can be of no particular benefit to the community at large," said Master Francis.

"Of so little that their benefit must be in no comparison with their mischief," answered the other. "The ostensible object of all such establishments appeareth to be the exclusive serving of God, but that God is better served by a certain set of dirty fellows that mayhap live in unwholesome cells, when they might have comfortable lodging, going barefooted when they might be properly shod, wearing of one dress when they might have a change as cleanliness made it necessary, and fasting nigh unto starvation when they might eat enough and be thankful, than he shall be by those who come to him with a clean skin and a decent garment, and a heart full of thankfulness for the blessings he hath sent for their partaking, and are moreover industrious citizens, good husbands, and careful fathers, I will never believe. But all monasteries are not of this sort. In the greater number, as was proved at the dissolving of the religious houses in the reign of Henry the Eighth, there were fellows whose portly persons showed they lacked nothing either in eating or drinking; and as for other indulgences there can be no doubt that they rioted in a very infamous dissoluteness and prodigality. And that this be serving of God in the best way will I never believe.

"Then as to nunneries, the chief boasts of them seemeth to be in the preservation of the chastity of their members, who are such women as choose to retire from the allurements of the world, or are forced to it. In the first place I maintain, and I doubt not to find plenty to believe me, that such chastity as can only be preserved by being shut up close in stone walls, is not worth the keeping. It is very snow, that must be kept in a cold corner, else it will clean melt away. In the next place, 'tis no preservation at all, for it be nothing else than a continual endeavor to stifle the very delicatest feelings of humanity, that have been given as a source of every excellence in woman, and every happiness in man. Nor is it chastity, for the wife may be chaste, but a nun knoweth nothing of chastity, she only practiseth continency, which is no virtue of any kind, but a quality of no more service to herself or to anybody else than her ever wearing of a certain kind of a garment, instead of others in which she would find the greater comfort, or fasting for any unnatural long time when she hath plenty of wholesome food at hand. That a way of life that preventeth a woman from becoming a loving wife and a tender mother, and a giver and receiver of such sweet affection as be a delight to think of, which beyond all dispute are the properest qualities of womanhood, be the best way of serving God will I never believe. Yet as there have been other monasteries than the strict ones, so have there been other than such nunneries, in the which it was proved, every conceivable kind of profligacy was proceeding; and that *this* be serving of God in the best way will I never believe."

"Methinks then you must have a still less opinion of hermits and the like," observed the secretary.

"Hermits, anchorites, and others, who live entire by themselves, are of three sorts—fools, knaves, and madmen," replied Sir Walter. "They shall be fools if they live upon herbs when they might have wholesome food—they are knaves if they practise austerity for the sake of such offerings as a few simple peasants may bring to their abodes—and they must be madmen if they imagine that standing upon a pillar, lying on a board covered with nails, wearing of a hair shirt, or flagellating of themselves without mercy, shall be of any kind of service to them either in this world or in the next. I would as soon respect a jackass for eating of thistles as a man for living upon roots; and as for the humility of such men, there lieth a monstrous deal more ostentation under rags and filth than you shall find beneath a robe of purple and a clean skin. Now, it hath generally happened that anchorites either leave the world, or the world leaveth them, and seek to live in solitary places when they no longer can find pleasure in the abodes of their fellow-men; or that knowing something ill that they have done, these their fellow-men will have none of them, and force them to take to a hiding-place and a severe life for the acquirement of a better reputation than what they had. In most instances a man becometh a hermit or a monk from dis-

gust of life, or disappointment of the world, and seeketh in self mortification and a solitary living, to lose remembrance of what he hath suffered. None but a fanatic ever became such upon choice. It seemeth to me that he is considered the happiest amongst them who shall succeed in making himself the most miserable; and that *this* be serving of God in the best way will I never believe.

"In short, it hath all along been my conviction that if these pretended lovers of solitude, instead of seeking of a recluse life, and undergoing of numberless voluntary hardships, had attempted the practice of some honest calling, and had bestowed on the poor and helpless such assistance as might have been in their power to give, they would have lived in such a sort as would have been much pleasanter to themselves, of more advantage to the world, and a wonderful degree more to the true glory of Him they sought to serve by it."

To this Master Francis replied not. Dame Elizabeth had all the time seemed to take exceeding interest in the discourse, now turning to her husband, and now to his secretary, as each spoke, with a countenance that evinced she found wonderful pleasure in what was going on, and occasionally putting up of her finger to the child when he appeared in any way inclined to interrupt either of them. It was in this way that Sir Walter Raleigh oft invited his young companion to express his thoughts, and then, if he found him in any error, would straightway proceed to set him right in the matter.

"Liked you our last voyage, Master Francis?" inquired he, after a silence of some few minutes.

"Indeed did I, Sir Walter," replied the youth.

"Then, if I gain my liberty, as soon after as may be, will I be upon another," added his patron. "In truth, have I for some time considered of it, and methinks you will find in it far more attraction than the preceding, for it hath for its object no other than a search after the right famous El Dorado, or city of gold, the which am I in tolerable certainty of finding."

"I like the idea of it exceedingly," observed Master Francis, with some earnestness: and then he waited in expectation of hearing more upon the subject; but, somewhat to his disappointment, Sir Walter soon after set him about the writing of some papers, and then went to lean out of the window, where he long remained, gazing upon the vessels in the river.

"There goeth the queen's barge," exclaimed he, all of a sudden; then turning to his wife, added, "now, Bess, will I essay what thou hast desired of me,"—and hastily left the room.

CHAPTER XVIII.

If so be that one had a pump in your bosom, I believe we should discover a foul hold. They say a witch will sail in a sieve, but I believe the devil would not venture aboard your conscience.
CONGREVE.

Seal up your lips, and give no words but—mum! The business asketh silent secresy.
SHAKSPEARE.

Olivia. Did he write this?
Clown. Ay, madam.
Duke. This savors not much of distraction.
Olivia. See him delivered. IBID.

It was not many hours after the transpiring of what hath been writ in the preceding chapter, that Sir Robert Cecil and my Lord Henry Howard sat together in close converse in the armory at Burghley house. How long they had been so engaged no man knoweth to this day; but there seemed a marvellous deal of secresy in what they were talking of—their looks were exceeding mysterious, and they smiled in such a sort as do men pleased with their own craftiness. Upon a small circular table, close to which they sat opposite each other, lay sundry papers and letters, which Cecil did read and make comments on, as if they were of great import; and the other appeared to give such explanations as might be necessary to the perfect understanding of them.

"Then you are sure that my Lord Essex hath constant communication with the Scottish king?" inquired Sir Robert.

"I have it from my trusty correspondent Master Edward Bruce," replied the Lord Henry Howard, "that King James stands well affected toward my Lord Essex, from whom he hath continual intelligence of all things relating to the queen."

"That hath a bad look for our interests," remarked Cecil. "If we mind not, Essex will so ingratiate himself with his majesty, that we shall scarce be able to keep up our heads when he cometh to these realms. And yet the king seemeth to hold us in good countenance."

"Without doubt doth he," answered the other. "I do believe, from what Master Bruce hath writ, that he putteth

great confidence in you. Would it not be good policy, think you, to set the king's mind against him, as we have done against Sir Walter Raleigh and my Lord Cobham."

"That would be a difficult matter, and a dangerous matter to boot," replied Sir Robert. "King James hath knowledge of my Lord Essex, and hath of him a favorable opinion, the which methinks would be no easy matter to shake; while of Raleigh or Cobham he knew naught, therefore could the easier believe aught that was said of them. My Lord Essex hath also divers powerful friends at the Scottish court, who, 'tis like enough, would not rest idle while attempts were made to ruin him with the king: and of such influence, neither my brother-in-law nor his fine friend could make any boast. I doubt not being able to spoil the ambitiousness of all such in good time; but at present it be a difficult task to do either Raleigh or Essex any great hurt without the other being the sole gainer by it."

"Mean you to let Raleigh out?" asked his companion.

"It must needs be," said Cecil. "I mean to move the queen about it; and these letters I have received will doubtless go far to the completing of the business. As I expected, my Lord of Essex hath grown all the haughtier for the banishment of his rival. He beareth himself as if he had sovereign authority; but, paramount as he thinketh himself, will I pull him down."

"He hath now got completely the favor of the queen," observed the Lord Howard. "Indeed, never saw I her majesty so gracious to him as she hath been of late: it seemeth as if he might have what he lists for the asking of it."

"Count not upon that," replied his companion, with something of a sneer upon his countenance; "he is one of those fools that seem ever inclined to the quarrelling with their good fortune. He playeth the lover bravely, I am well aware; and that her majesty delighteth in having one of such gallant bearing at her side, I make no manner of doubt; but such happens to be his disposition, that the more she alloweth him of her favor, the more will he increase his demands upon it; and upon ever so slight a cause, will straightway become petulant, and give her majesty some offence."

"I doubt much all that we have said to him concerning Raleigh hath been of any service," said the other. "I noticed him some time back speaking of Sir Walter, in the presence, in exceeding friendly terms."

"That is easily accounted for," exclaimed Cecil; "he can afford to speak well of one who is in discredit, and therefore can in no way excite his jealousy, or ruffle his pride; but let Raleigh return to his former influence, and I warrant you Essex shall be marvellously sparing of his good word for him."

"O' my life I know not which I mislike the most," cried his companion, evidently with much sincerity—"the one be so pestilent proud, and the other such a thorough upstart."

"Both shall fall, and neither know who giveth the blow," replied Sir Robert very coolly. "For all that my Lord Essex seemeth in such fine feather at present, methinks he will be the first for the tumble; for he is the more easily worked upon, being rash, haughty, and apt at a desperate fancy. Though he can persuade himself that I am honest to him, yet would he none the less be ready to quarrel with me, should I give him occasion. Raleigh considereth me his true friend, and this character must I keep up with him, else might he have some suspicion of my real intentions. He is by far the difficultest character to deal with, for he hath prudence and knowledge as much as any man; but methinks I shall touch him through Cobham, who is weak enough to be easily misled, and, on account of their strict intimacy, may as easily involve the other."

"Hast heard of this Master Francis Bacon, the son of old Sir Nicholas, that is said to counsel my Lord Essex in every thing?" inquired his companion.

"I have heard of his being well learned in the subtleties of the law," replied Cecil. "But further than this know I nothing."

"I have heard famous talk of him," added my Lord Henry Howard eagerly. "It hath been said that the greatness of his learning maketh all persons marvel. He can discourse on the abstrusest matters of science and philosophy in such a sort as will astonish even the profoundest scholars, and there appeareth no particle of human knowledge he is not as familiar with as others shall be with the commonest things. Nay, I can not tell you half the wonderful things that be said of him. It be moreover related, on credible testimony, that my Lord Essex hath taken him to live with him in his house, where he is to be his friend, and counsel

him on all matters of difficulty and importance."

"I doubt hugely my Lord Essex will allow of the counselling of any man," replied his companion. "He is of too great a spirit, of too proud a heart, and too vain a mind."

"Nevertheless, 'tis believed of all that he will advance his fortunes at court," observed the other. "Where, if Master Bacon possess such monstrous excellence as report hath declared, it be like enough he will come to some distinction. Mayhap we shall then have to deal with *him;* and if he hath any particular knowledge of laws and government beyond that of others, it may chance he shall attain to so high an eminence as shall put him out of our reach."

"He shall be raised high indeed if I can not lay a hold on him," said Cecil. "If he be sufficiently pliant I will make a tool of him, let his learning be what it may, and then shall he work for his own advantage and mine too; but if he be of such nature as are those whose stubborn spirits will not bow to any control of mine, then will I seek either to overreach him, or undermine him, so that he shall topple headlong, as in good time shall I make Essex and Raleigh."

"How mean you to work with these two when Raleigh is let out?" asked his companion.

"In a like manner as hath been done hitherto," replied Sir Robert. "I will with as much secresy as shall be possible, set the one in opposition unto the other, and yet in the belief of both endeavor to appear the very good friend of each. With Essex methinks my labor will be easy, notwithstanding he hath taken to himself so sage a counsellor as Master Bacon, for immediately he findeth the other in rivalship with him, you shall find him ready of belief to aught concerning of Raleigh that seemeth to threaten his pre-eminence, then straightway will he become as haughty and insolent as you please, the which will sufficiently convince Sir Walter that he beareth him no good will, and he will, as it were in self-defence, set about the strengthening of his own position in the queen's favor, and the lessening of his rival's influence; and this appearing a greater show of opposition shall so incense my Lord Essex, that if he break not out quickly into direct and open violence, I lack judgment in his character. Upon this, 'tis like enough the queen shall be in some way wrath with him; for despite of her seeming fondness, I am hugely mistaken if she would not look upon any affront done upon Raleigh whilst he possessed her consideration, as an offence to herself; whereupon it would be easy to move her to send my lord from court to some office of great honor, yet of greater difficulty afar off, the which the boastfulness of his spirit would make him eager to accept: there placed, his rashness and unskilfulness would soon involve him and her majesty's government in some terrible embarrassment, which should more and more lose him the queen's favor, till she put upon him such disgrace as his proud spirit can never stomach, and then his rashness will like enough set him upon some desperate enterprise of a treasonable nature to regain his lost ascendency, which failing, as it needs must in the hands of one so headstrong, there shall presently be an end of my Lord of Essex."

"Admirably devised!" exclaimed the Lord Henry Howard, in a marvellous cheerfulness. "'Tis good! I'faith, 'tis excellent good! 'Tis a plan so deep and of so fine a contrivance that it can not fail of success. But how shall this affect our interest with the Scottish king, who by all accounts is so well inclined toward my Lord of Essex, that he would take instant indignation against any who should do him an injury."

"We will so bring it about that it shall appear as if we had no hand in it," replied his wily companion. "At the same time we would contrive to shift the blameableness of it upon Raleigh and Cobham, which shall the more incense the king against them."

"Good again!" cried the other with increased gratification. "'Tis as well conceived a plot as was ever thought of. Then how shall we do with Raleigh when the other is put out of the way?"

"Methinks we shall have some difficulty to get him to commit himself, because of his exceeding prudence," answered Cecil. "He will in no way anger the queen if he can help it, if she forgive him his foolishness in marrying of Elizabeth Throckmorton: therefore he shall not be made to lose his influence at court so easily as may at first be thought. We must either build upon her majesty's variable humor, or await a better opportunity. At least, we will do what we can; and, in the meantime, by persuading of the Scottish king that Raleigh and Cobham are ever in opposition to his succession—that they hold him in small respect, and were foremost in the working of the

downfall of my Lord of Essex, he shall acquire such a dislike of them both, that upon the king's coming to these realms, which can not in the course of nature be long first, seeing that the queen waxeth old and sickly exceeding fast, he shall disgrace them and distinguish us. Methinks even then 'twill be a difficult task to get Raleigh into the doing of such an act as would put his life in jeopardy, though 'tis easy to believe he would be hugely discontented. But I know my brother-in-law Cobham to be vain and weak, and like enough to be so indignant at the slight which would be put upon him by the Scottish king, as to be readily drawn into any treasonable conspiracy, into the which 'tis natural enough to believe he would presently seek to draw his friend; whereupon, if Raleigh will have no share in it, I doubt not being able to make it appear as if he was a principal, which shall be quite sufficient to bring him to such a trial as must needs end in the lopping off of his head."

"O' my life! never heard I any scheme possessed of so wonderful a cunning!" exclaimed his companion, as if in a monstrous admiration. "In my mind is there no doubt of the very completeness of our success."

"All that be necessary to secure it is a sufficient secresy," added Sir Robert. "In your letters to Master Bruce seek not to say more than the occasion shall warrant; and in all other communications whatsoever take heed to write or speak in such a style as none but the trustworthy can make anything of. Appear to all three acting toward them with a sufficient friendliness; and if you say aught to one against the other, let it not appear too officious of you, but the rather lamenting that there should be anything but harmony betwixt them. By these means shall you gain their confidence, and give no color of suspicion in your actions."

"I will fail in nothing that infinite dislike of them can accomplish," answered my Lord Howard.

"Now will I take these letters to the queen," said his companion, as he took some papers from the table. "If I find her in the mood, which 'tis like she will be, I will essay to move her to Raleigh's liberation, the which if I accomplish, I doubt not by it raising myself so high in his opinion, that he will take me for his best friend ever after; and give me by his confidence such opportunity as I may want for the furtherance of my plans."

Upon the saying of this both prepared themselves to depart, and soon after went together to court, which was held at no great distance, the queen then staying at Somerset house. Somehow it did happen that as they were journeying in that direction they chanced to meet my Lord Cobham; and between him and them there were presently such greetings as might have convinced a looker-on that few could be so well disposed toward each other as were Sir Robert Cecil and my Lord Henry Howard toward my Lord Cobham. Presently Cecil did tell his brother-in-law, in a manner as if his whole heart was in the business, how long and how anxiously he had been seeking for an opportunity to serve their imprisoned friend, and now that he was going to the queen with great hopes of so disposing her toward him, that at the least the accomplishment of his object, which was no other than the liberation of Sir Walter Raleigh, for whom he would at all times strain his utmost, he held him in so high a respect for his many commendable qualities, would be achieved at no very distant day. At this my Lord Cobham seemed in a very excess of gratification; and did not proceed on his way before he had expressed himself to that effect.

"Now will that silly woodcock make such a report of what I have said to his chosen friend," observed Sir Robert to his companion when my Lord Cobham was out of hearing, "that I shall be considered so honest of heart toward Raleigh as to be quickly in high esteem of both. But 'tis with such baits these fine birds are caught."

They had not made much progress after this, before they observed my Lord Essex, surrounded with a goodly group of some of the highest nobles in the land and men of distinction, in such gallant array as was quite a splendor to behold, bearing it so bravely among them as made it evident he was considered as the very greatest man of them all. He hardly seemed to notice Cecil and his associate, save by a haughty bend of his head, and so little were they cared for by the group, that the two were obliged to content themselves with the road, the pathway being entirely taken up with my Lord Essex's friends, who appeared in no way inclined to make room for them to pass.

"Ah!" exclaimed Cecil with some bitterness, looking after them with an exceeding frowning countenance when they had got some way, "you ruffle it famously, my lord, without doubt; but high

as you hold your head, if I make it not lie as low as shall lie that of the meanest man in these kingdoms, then have I strangely mistaken mine own power."

"A set of pestilent proud fellows!" cried my Lord Howard very indignantly, "to force us into the road! Nay, if this Essex be not put down shortly, there will be no finding of a pathway for oneself in all the realm, for him and his insolent followers."

A few minutes after, they arrived at Somerset house, where, bidding my Lord Henry Howard tarry in one of the waiting-rooms, Sir Robert Cecil went straight to the queen's closet, in which he found her majesty dressed to go on a journey, and seemingly in a very fair humor. Upon saying that he had private business to communicate, the queen instantly did dismiss all her attendants, and sat herself down in some stateliness, to know of what pressing matter it might be, for he was greatly in her confidence.

"Any news from France?" inquired the queen, "or is Philip of Spain proceeding to any further hostile measures against us?"

"I have news from France, please your majesty," replied Cecil, "which seemeth to me of the uttermost importance."

"Ha!" quickly exclaimed her majesty. "Hath the league got the upper hand? But God forbid such murderous villains should triumph! Is the Duc de Guise in paramount authority? But 'tis not to be believed so base and brutal a wretch could be allowed to have sovereign power. Doth not the Huguenots prosper? Or hath any ill hap come to their gallant leader Henri?"

"Please your majesty, my advices are enough to make me despair of my fellow-protestants," answered Sir Robert. "'Tis reported that Henri is about to change his religion."

"The traitor!" cried the queen, looking exceeding disturbed. "Surely he can never think of so base a thing as to forsake the holy protestant cause to become a spiritual vassal of his arch enemy the pope? 'Tis not to be believed of him."

"I doubt not, please your majesty, that by this time 'tis already done," observed her companion, then laying some papers before her, added, "here is the correspondence of your majesty's agent at the French court, in which will be found the excuses Henri hath made to him for the taking of such a step."

"What inexcusable villany!" exclaimed Elizabeth, seemingly in great anger. "What horrible ingratitude! After we have sought to serve him in all possible ways, he can show no better return for such goodness, but the doing of this shameful apostacy. We will write to him speedily our opinion of so deplorable, so wicked an act: and for these papers, we will look over them at our leisure. What letters are those you have in your hand?"

"Please your majesty, they shall be found of very different sort," replied the other. "They relate to a matter in which your majesty is like to be charged with the death of a certain gallant knight, who, having incurred your majesty's displeasure, seemeth to have gone quite distraught because he can no longer delight his heart with the marvellous comeliness of your majesty's royal countenance."

"Alack! and is it so indeed?" inquired the queen, with an expression of some concern. "Hath his wits forsook him on that account? Poor man! mayhap he is to be pitied. But who is this knight?"

"It is one, please your majesty," answered Cecil, "who hath doubtless well deserved all he hath got, for 'tis beyond all doubt he hath committed great offence; but methinks—that is, if your majesty will graciously allow your poor servant to think upon such a business—that, as he hath suffered very severely, and undoubtedly hath that opinion of your majesty's perfections which be very proper in him to have, your gracious consideration of his offence may not be otherwise than beneficial to him, for it can not help making him the more ashamed of what he hath done, whilst the punishment he hath endured must needs keep the fault properly in his remembrance. Please your majesty, it is Sir Walter Raleigh who hath been brought to this pitiable strait."

"Away with him!" exclaimed Elizabeth, yet not with any particular anger. "We doubt that he deserves any pity of us whom he hath so foully wronged."

"Mayhap, if the truth could be come at, please your majesty," said Sir Robert, "she who brought him into the doing of such a wickedness was the more to blame than he; for upon perusing of these letters, and from divers other sources, I feel assured that the entireness of his devotion unto your majesty was so extreme, that he could not, of his own accord, have committed such evil. He was beguiled into it, as it were."

"Like enough," replied the queen, "that Elizabeth Throckmorton was vile enough to induce him into any baseness:

but he should have known better than to have tolerated so infamous a creature. And then to have taken her to wife. Oh, it was villanous!"

"Perchance he did it to save her from utter disgrace," observed Cecil. "It is on the face of it, please your majesty, he married her from no hope of advantage. He could get no gain of it. Methinks, then, he is more to be pitied than blamed, or that he should be considered more foolish than ill inclined. But I have a letter here from Master Arthur Gorges—one of a creditable testimony—that relateth to something which hath lately taken place in the Tower, in the which Sir Walter Raleigh did behave very strangely, that seemeth to me to be exceeding proper that your majesty should hear of."

"We are careless whether you read it or not," said the queen; yet looking all the while as if she was wonderfully eager to hear it read. "But since you have it in your hand you may as well make us acquainted with its contents."

Permission had scarcely been given before Sir Robert did commence the perusal of the following:—

"Honorable Sir:

"I can not choose but advertise you of a strange tragedy that this day had like to have fallen out between the captain of the guard, Sir Walter Raleigh, and the lieutenant of the ordnance, if I had not by great chance come at the very instant, to have turned it into a comedy. For, upon the report of her majesty's being at Sir George Carey's, Sir Walter Raleigh having gazed and sighed a long time at his study window, from which he might discern the barges and the boats about the Blackfriars' stairs; suddenly he brake into a great distemper, and sware that his enemies had on purpose brought her majesty thither to break his gall in sunder with Tantalus's torment, that when she went away he might gaze his death before his eyes—with many such like conceits. And as a man transported with passion, he sware to Sir George Carew that he would disguise himself, and get into a pair of oars to ease his mind but with a sight of the queen, or else he protested his heart would break. But the trusty jailer would none of that, for displeasing the high powers, as he said, which he more respected than the feeding of his humor; and so flatly refused to permit him. But in conclusion, upon this dispute they fell flat out to outrageous choleric words, with straining and struggling at the doors, that all lameness was forgotten, and, in the fury of the conflict, the jailer had his new perwig torn off his crown; and yet here the battle ended not, for at last they had gotten out their daggers, which, when I saw, I played the stickler between them, and so purchased such a rap on the knuckles, that I wished both their pates broken; and so with much ado they stayed their brawl to see my bloody fingers. At the first I was ready to break with laughing, to see them two scramble and brawl like madmen, until I saw the iron walking, and then I did my best to appease the fury. As yet, I can not reconcile them by any persuasions, for Sir Walter swears he shall hate him for so restraining him from the sight of his mistress, while he lives; for that he knows not, as he said, whether he shall ever see her again, when she has gone the progress. And Sir George, on his side, swears that he had rather he should lose his longing than he should draw on him her majesty's displeasure by such liberty. Thus they continue in malice and snarling; but I am sure all the smart lighted on me. I can not tell whether I should more allow of the passionate lover or the trusty jailer. But if yourself had seen it, as I did, you would have been as heartily merry as ever you were in all your life for so short a time. I pray you pardon my hasty written narration which I acquaint you with, hoping you will be the peace-maker. But, good sir, let nobody know thereof; for I fear Sir Walter Raleigh will shortly grow to be Orlando Furioso, if the bright Angelica persevere against him a little longer."

Queen Elizabeth appeared to listen with marvellous attention while the letter was being read, ever and anon smiling very prettily, and smirking up her wrinkles after such a fashion as showed she was monstrous well pleased with the whole affair.

"Well, he must be in a tearing humor, certainly, if he goeth on at such a rate as that," observed the queen, laughingly. "We knew not that our venturing to Sir George Carey's would have caused so terrible to-do, else mayhap we might have changed our course. 'Tis grievous to think Sir Walter Raleigh should take on so on our account, yet hath he none other to thank for it but himself, and the wicked Jesabel he hath married."

"Then, am I to judge, from what your majesty hath stated, that you will graciously be pleased to give your un-

happy prisoner his liberty?" inquired Cecil.

"Not so fast!" exclaimed her majesty, with a more serious countenance. "We intend naught of the kind, depend on't. 'Twould be a fine thing, truly, were we so credulous as to believe all that hath been writ in your friend's letter. How know you not it be all a counterfeit? 'Tis like enough the whole affair is mere invention. But we are not juggled so easily as may be supposed of us. We put no faith in fine words. We can not abide flatterers."

"Ah! please your majesty," cried Sir Robert, in a wonderful earnestness, "I can not see how there can be anything in the shape of flattery ever presented to your majesty's ear; for your majesty, it is well known, hath such extraordinary excellences, that however the world may praise, it can not do otherwise than speak the truth."

"Nay, we are in no way better than the ordinary," replied the queen, as if carelessly, yet well delighted with such language. "By God's good help, we are not badly off in some qualities, yet, doubtless, have we our faults, nevertheless."

"If your majesty hath faults, 'tis a marvel to know where they lie," answered her wily companion; "for many have carefully looked for such, and could get no sight of them, let them search ever so. If it be not thought too bold of me, I would fain present unto your majesty that clemency hath ever been your majesty's brightest attribute: and although this Raleigh hath behaved himself infamously, which none can gainsay, yet hath he suffered in such a sort"——

"By God's wrath, he shall stay where he is," sharply exclaimed the queen, interrupting the other in the very middle of what he had been about to say.

"Then there is no occasion for me to read your majesty this letter," observed Cecil, turning another letter over and over in his hand. "It is of Sir Walter's own writing to me; and speaketh of your majesty in such exeeeding delicate terms, that my heart was quite moved at it. But I will put it up, since the perusing of it meeteth not with your majesty's approbation."

"Nay, do not so," cried the queen, as she observed the letter about to disappear; "we care not for its being read, yet if it be worded with a proper respect of us, it can do us no wrong to hear of it."

"Indeed, 'tis the very properest piece of writing eye of mine ever beheld, please your majesty," replied Sir Robert; and thereupon proceeded quickly to the perusing of what hath here been writ:—

"Sir:

"I pray you be a mean to her majesty for the signing of the bills for the guards' coats, which are to be made now for the progress, and which the clerk of the check hath importuned me to write for. My heart was never broken till this day, that I hear the queen goes away so far off, whom I have followed so many years with so great love and desire in so many journeys, and am now left behind her in a dark prison all alone. While she was yet near at hand, that I might hear of her once in two or three days, my sorrows were the less; but even now my heart is cast into the depth of all misery. I that was wont to behold her riding like Alexander—hunting like Diana—walking like Venus; the gentle wind blowing her fair hair about her pure cheeks, like a nymph; sometimes sitting in the shade like a goddess—sometimes singing like an angel—sometime playing like Orpheus. Behold the sorrow of this world! once amiss hath bereaved me of all. O glory! that only shineth in misfortune, what is become of thy assurance? All wounds have scars, but that of fantasy; all affections their relenting, but that of womankind. Who is the judge of friendship, but adversity; or when is grace witnessed, but in offences? There were no divinity, but by reason of compassion; for revenges are brutish and mortal. All those times past, the loves, the sighs, the sorrows, the desires, can they not weigh down one frail misfortune? Can not one drop of gall be hidden in such great heaps of sweetness? I may then conclude, *spec et fortuna, valete!* She is gone, in whom I trusted; and of me hath not one thought of mercy, nor any respect of that that was. Do with me now, therefore, what you list. I am more weary of life than they are desirous that I should perish; which, if it had been for her, as it is by her, I had been too happily born.

"Yours, not worthy any name or title,

"W. R."

It was a marvellous sight to observe the countenance of the queen during the perusal of the foregoing. At the first few sentences she seemed moved to a great attention; when it came to the describing of her riding like Alexander, and the like gross flattery, the sudden flushing of her face showed itself all through her cosmetics; and at her being likened unto a

goddess, an angel, and Orpheus, she simpered famously, and showed her teeth, which were none of the whitest. But when the writer began to make his dolorous moan, the which Sir Robert read with so pitiful an accent, as if his heart was a breaking, her majesty looked concerned, then piteous, then sorrowful, and at the ending of the letter she put up her handkerchief to her eyes; but whether there was any likelihood of tears, know I not.

"Odds pittikins! it be wonderful moving," exclaimed the queen; "he hath suffered more than we thought of: he shall have some comfort straight. But read that passage again, Sir Robert, that beginneth concerning of our riding like Alexander."

At this Cecil, with very good expression, read the whole of that dainty piece of extravagance a second time, to the which the queen did lend her ears in a manner that showed she was infinitely pleased at it.

"Ah! never was anything so delicately writ," cried her majesty, earnestly; "he hath a good opinion of us, that is a sure thing; so we must e'en let him out of prison. Go on the instant and see that he have his liberty. 'Tis a cruel thing to let him suffer what he doth. Indeed, it be exceeding delicately writ."

It may easily be imagined Cecil lost but little time in executing of her majesty's commands; and to the great joy of all his friends, and in particular to his beautiful wife, Sir Walter Raleigh left the Tower the same day.

CHAPTER XIX.

Come, spur away,
I have no patience for a longer stay;
But must go down,
And leave the changeable noise of this great town.
I will the country see,
Where old simplicity,
Though hid in gray,
Doth look more gay
Than foppery in plush and scarlet clad.
RANDOLPH.

In thy fair breast, and once fair soul,
I thought my vows were writ alone;
But others' oaths so blurred the scroll,
That I no more could read my own.
And am I still obliged to pay,
When you had thrown the bond away?
SIR ROBERT HOWARD.

I MUST now hurry the courteous reader a little forward in this my narration, first premising that Sir Walter Raleigh, though he had his liberty of the queen, was not allowed of her to appear at court, and was still a sort of prisoner at large; the which to Dame Elizabeth, was of huge discomfort, and she was ever urging him to the doing of such honorable deeds and great enterprise as the report thereof might regain for him the queen's favor. Indeed, so admirable a wife scarce ever lived as she proved herself to be at all times; for, though the knowledge of his disgrace having come upon him on her account, ever made her monstrously ill at heart, she was intent upon the continual cheering of him, seemingly with such fine spirits as was marvellous to behold, knowing of her unhappiness; and though it could not be disputed she loved him as her life, and cared for nothing so much as his society, she would in no way allow of his giving such attention to her as might interfere with the carrying on of such great intentions as appeared likely to restore him to the honorable influence he had lost. Despite, however, of this seeming disparagement of his fortunes, he was chosen at this time for a parliament man, and soon did so distinguish himself as an orator, in the advancement of all such measures as were for the public good, and for the safety of the state, more particularly in the complete disclosing of the hateful intrigues and malignant designs of Queen Elizabeth's powerful enemy, the king of Spain, that he won for himself the opinion of many who had thought ill of him hitherto: and though her majesty looked exceeding inveterate against him, and would not hear of his venturing into her presence, this was merely the behavior of an offended woman; for, as a sovereign, she could not help esteeming of his worth, and as a sign thereof, at some solicitation of him, she did grant him the manor of Sherborne, in Dorsetshire; a very princely gift, for it did include the castle and park, and a fair piece of land.

Here did he employ himself delightedly for some time. He builded, he planted, he sowed with such skilfulness, that the place all around and about became quite an earthly paradise. There was soon newly raised a most fine house, bountifully embellished with all manner of orchards, gardens, and groves, so fair to look upon, that for a right delicate aspect, it had not its like in those parts. But his excellent wife would not allow him to be satisfied with these pursuits, doubtless thinking that, surrounded by so many enticing pleasures, his noble spirit

might sink into indolence, and he should not be able to recover his lost greatness; therefore he did liberally employ his pen in the writing of such papers to the queen, concerning of the dangers of England from foreign states, as might put her to a careful regard of her own security. Though he failed not to accompany them with most moving complaints of the unpleasantness of his situation, in being kept from serving of her majesty in such sort as he desired, while she paid the properest attention to what he stated upon matters of state, she heeded not anything that related to his own affairs. In truth, she was so taken up with my Lord Essex at this time, that she cared not for the presence of his rival. Yet had she such estimation of Raleigh's insight into the designs of her enemies, in the which her great discrimination in such matters made her a profound judge, that she would receive aught from him, in the way of information, with more respect than she would give even to the opinions of any in greater favor with her.

Finding that all these endeavors of his availed him nothing, he then commenced preparations for the going upon a grand expedition, having for its object no other than the discovery and conquest of that wonderful rich country called Guiana, in which was situated, as had been related by many credible writers, that far-famed city styled El Dorado. Now it was the belief of all persons of experience inhabiting the coast of the Spanish main, that there was an inland country abounding in such store of gold and precious things, as exceeded all sober belief among other people. And, moreover, it was said by the Spaniards generally, that upon their conquest of the great empire of Peru, a kinsman of the last reigning inca Atabalipa did make his escape from that country, and taking with him a powerful force, and so wonderful a store of treasure that the like hath never since been heard of, did migrate into a place afar off, where, in the course of time he established for himself a richer kingdom than that he had left. This new country so abounded with mines of the most precious ore, as was reported, and with other costly things, that the fame of such great riches had stirred up divers Spanish commanders to attempt its conquest; but all had failed, from the lack of such knowledge in them as might lead them to the discovery of the exact place where this El Dorado might be found. In the meanwhile, the fame of such a wealthy country more and more increased, not only among the Spaniards, but it spread from them into other nations; and among those notable commanders who were ambitious to attempt its discovery and conquest, Sir Walter Raleigh had long been of the foremost.

He saw at a glance that there was nothing so like to restore him to the queen's favor as the succeeding in so famous an enterprise; and to the acquiring of the necessary knowledge, and the getting of proper assistance from his friends, he now bent all the powers of his mind. With the first of these objects in view, he presently fitted out a ship under the command of one Captain Whiddon, in whom he placed his trust, to obtain such information as he could of Guiana at the island of Trinidad, and make such observations of the coast bordering on the Orinoco (a famous river in the New World, up which he must go to approach the place he sought), as might be serviceable to him when he proceeded on the voyage. Then for the other object—he made it public that he was about to venture himself on this alluring expedition, and such was his reputation in these things, that in a marvellous brief space he was addressed by scores of the bravest spirits in the land, eager to join him in the adventure. With his share of the prize taken at the Azores, which, despite of what was seized of the queen and pilfered by the men, amounted to so large a sum, that after the making of all his improvements at Sherborne, he had still enough to spare to commence the procuring of such an armament as seemed to him sufficient for the realizing of his wishes; in the doing of which it was not long before he had such assistance from those desirous of embarking with him, that his preparations proceeded so fast as to make him and his adventure the subject of the general talk.

When the captain whom he had sent out returned from his voyage, the information he brought, though it spoke of difficulty and danger, in no way abated the eagerness of Sir Walter Raleigh or his associates for the adventure; and now so well was it entertained of all men, even of those skilled in maritime affairs, and others of too much gravity to be easily misled, that my Lord Howard, the lord high admiral, did send him a ship of his own called the Lion's Whelp, and Sir Robert Cecil did forward him such

assistance as was like to stand him in good stead, and both, it hath been suspected, not without some coloring of probability, were done at the command of the queen; but as if it came of themselves, because she would seem as if she would have no hand in it, in consequence of his having so hugely offended her in the matter of Elizabeth Throckmorton. By these means there were collected of soldiers and their officers, and the gentlemen-adventurers, as many as a hundred, with mariners in sufficiency, and a squadron of five sail well equipped with all manner of warlike stores, and with such a complement of barges, wherries, and tenders, as might suffice for the inland navigation.

During this time Master Francis had grown to be as gallant a gentleman as you shall see of his years, well taught in all proper accomplishments, and in the possession of a beard which would have put his fitness for "doing the women," completely out of the conceit of Gib the call-boy. He was held in such estimation of Sir Walter Raleigh, for the aptness he displayed in everything, his modesty, and his affectionateness, that Sir Walter seemed inclined to stop at nothing for the advancement of his welfare, and his fortunes thus seemed to be in such goodly keeping that it was believed of many none ought to be more happy than he. Yet was he very doleful upon occasion. The more he moved among persons of worship, which he did in some respect of them, in consequence of the visible esteem he was held of Sir Walter and his lady, the more the knowledge he had acquired of his birth preyed upon his spirits. That he did earnestly pant after honor and distinction there is not a doubt; but, in the extreme sensitiveness of his mind, his illegitimacy came as a bar to his ambition; and the more he saw of what good opinion he was held in by others, the less did he live in his own repute. Whenever he was in company, and there began a talk about noble descent and the like, the hot blood would rush into his cheek, and he would feel as if well inclined to sink into the ground, so that he might escape the gaze of those around him. To him it were as if all had a suspicion of the disgrace he was born in, and he was continually in fear that some one or other would find him out for what he was, and would begin a whispering it about, till he should be turned from with coldness, or pointed at with contempt.

Of Joanna he found himself thinking more often than he desired. For some time after he had seen her last he had heard nothing from her; then there came to him a letter in her hand, the which he straight returned unopened. After that there came a message from her borne by one whom he knew not, that she earnestly desired to have speech of him, of the which he took no heed. Since that he was troubled no more by her; but he heard of his true friend Harry Daring that she had been seized with a sickness that brought her nigh unto death's door; and it was said by Dame Margery that she was all the while in a violent phrensy that could not in any way be allayed, and that she called upon Master Francis so piteously, that old Lather, who attended her, knew not what it all meant. This put the young secretary in some trouble, for though he doubted not of her guiltiness, he had no desire that she should be in such a strait as she then was. Sometimes he would think he had been too hasty, and a doubt would occasionally arise in him that she was not so blameable as she seemed, for what had been said of her by the old woman might not be true. But then he quickly remembered it was so strongly corroborated by what Harry Daring had seen; and what he had himself been witness to under the gateway, was of such a sort that it was plain her conduct could not be justified. Upon her recovery he treated her letter and message as hath been described, and determined in his mind to forget her, as one unworthy of a thought; but forget her he never did.

It was about this time that Master Francis, having oft spoken to his patron of the courageous spirit of the barber-chirurgeon's apprentice, did earnestly request of Sir Walter his good offices in providing of the boy, now grown of somewhat higher stature, and of great activity, some fitter employment for his courageous nature than what he held; and having sent for him at his patron's request, the latter was so pleased at Harry Daring's undauntedness that he presently took him into his service, and had him taught something of maritime affairs, designing him to be a petty officer in his projected expedition. At this no one could be in such huge delight as our young barber-chirurgeon. He left Eastcheap with an especial contempt of all things appertaining to chirurgery and barbering, and with the particular gratification of his master; for the tricks the apprentice had played upon his best cus-

tomers were so frequent and of such a sort that they were quickly destroying of his business. Therefore with marvellous gladness of heart he cancelled his indentures, and was well pleased to get rid of him at so cheap a rate: but Harry Daring went not without displaying of his love of mischief, or as he called it, "exquisite fine fun," in a manner best suited to his humor at such a time. He played such confusion among the medicaments as must sadly have puzzled old Lather to know what he had hold of when he should next meddle with them; for he mixed the liniments with the juleps, the syrups with the acids, and the purgatives with the carminatives. Then he notched the razors, broke off the points of the lancets, cut the brushes in such a fashion that upon being used all the bristles should fall out, and set a shelf of gallipots so insecure that on the slightest touch of his master they should all tumble on his head. After this he parted with the old man in a wonderful gravity, but from the time he got out of sight of him, up to his joining of Master Francis, he kept himself in a continual chuckle of delight at the thought of the monstrousness of old Lather's rage upon his discovering of what he had been at.

When he found himself with his true friend Master Francis he seemed as happy as his heart could be, for that he loved him with a perfect sincerity was out of all question. His friend was some few years the elder of the two, and was looked up to by him as something much superior to himself, because of his superior learning and the gentlemanliness of his appearance. Though he sought as much as he was able to keep down the mischievous propensities of the other, and Harry Daring seemed as if he would do anything to pleasure him, he had no great success in his efforts, for Harry was always a playing of some tricks upon the serving-men, whereof there were few who liked him much at first, but before a very long time he had cudgelled them all into respect of him; and once when Peter had come with his master, Sir Nicholas Throckmorton, a visiting at Sherborne, and that quarrelsome varlet had began a bullying of Harry Daring for having chalked an ass's head upon his back while he was asleep, Harry straightway challenged him to a bout at quarter staff, and in half of an hour or less, had given the big fellow such a drubbing that he was fain to cry out he had had enough of him. But such was the greatness of his spirit, that upon very little occasion he would fight like a dragon with any one, or any number, be they big or little, and he seemed as if he would rather die than give in. He constantly exercised himself with Master Francis in the firing of pistols, guns, in the use of the sword, and other warlike amusements, in which he quickly attained great practice, and he took care that he should hurt him not; but if he was a fencing with any other for whom he cared but little, depend on't he would give him a sly cut, and then put on a face of such concern at the accident, that every one believed he had not done it on the purpose.

With Stephen Shortcake, who had now become Sir Walter's steward, though he rated him famously when he found him at such things as driving of all the cocks together and setting them a fighting—or getting of the dogs to worry the bull—or tying of the tail of the old sow to that of a cat, and while the one scratched the other with a hideous screeching, the old sow took to her heels a grunting at such a rate that the whole neighborhood was in an uproar, and he upon the back of a jackass, without any other bridle than a halter, hunted them over the fields, whipping of his steed, a laughing, and hallooing like mad—his fearlessness made him somewhat of a favorite, the which grew to a greater liking when, as he was returning from a neighboring fair, the old man was set upon by thieves, and as they were a rifling of him, up came Harry Daring with his cudgel, and he so belabored them that one was left for dead, and the rest, sorely bruised, took themselves off with such speed of foot that they presently were gone clean out of sight. This piece of good service Stephen Shortcake never forgot, and told Sir Walter of it, and every one else he could, to the great credit of his defender; nay, when complaints were made to him of such mischief as the young rogue would oft do, he would hush it up as well as he could, that it might not come to the ears of his master.

Once Harry Daring was a walking along the high road by himself, anxious for some sport, he cared not of what sort, he met an old woman in a red cloak a going to market, seated on the top of a high horse between two panniers full of eggs; and walking by the side of her, he very soberly entered into a discourse upon the price of butter and cheese and such things; when all of a sudden he fired a pistol close unto the horse's ear, at the

which the animal set off full gallop, pitching of the old woman head foremost into a neighboring ditch, and shaking of the panniers till the eggs were all of a smash. After laughing heartily, he presently lifted the old dame out of the ditch, luckily in no way hurt, yet in as complete a pickle as was possible for her to be in; and, much lamenting of the accident, he caught her horse, which he brought to her to mount; but when she saw all her eggs a streaming through the panniers, and Dobbin's sides as yellow as a piece of gold, she would have none of his lamentations, and on the instant broke out into such a fury as might have been terrible for any one else to have looked upon. Of this he took no heed; but quickly began abusing of her in return, after so aggravating a fashion, that she ran at him to give him a good clouting, whereupon he dodged her round the horse till he made her legs ache again, laughing all the time, as if he had never had such excellent pastime; and when he had made sufficient sport of her, he took a quick run, and making a leap over the hedge close by which she stood, to her great astonishment vanished from her sight. However, it so happened that she found out where he lived, and she soon came in a desperate rage, and with a woful tale, to Stephen Shortcake, who, rather than Sir Walter Raleigh should hear of it, paid her handsomely out of his own gains for the damage she had been at, which sent her away in a better humor; but he allowed not Harry to get off from this mischievous trick of his without speaking to him severely upon the very heinousness of such doings, and showing him how like it was to lose him Sir Walter's favor, at the which the boy expressed such great contrition, with so very innocent a face, that the old steward was charmed with him, and gave him a cup of choice old wine to warm his young heart, as he said. Nevertheless, his contrition lasted not long, for the very next day Gabriel and Roger, two of the serving-men, fell into the brook, because of the plank going across having been sawn nearly through; and although upon close investigation it was found out nobody had done it, that it was a trick of Harry Daring's contrivance none doubted. During this time he discoursed frequently with Master Francis and others upon what he would do when he was a venturing of himself in foreign parts; for the intended adventure in search of El Dorado suited his humor to a nicety, and he spoke of the exquisite fine fun he should have in the killing of Spaniards, with a wonderful degree of pleasantness, as if all other pastimes were as naught to it.

Now that preparations for the expedition were so far advanced, there was a large party of the gentlemen-adventurers and the principal officers met at Sherborne, and with them a many of Sir Walter's choicest friends, to take leave of him. For two or three days these, his guests, were kept in the constant enjoyment of such pleasures as the country afforded. There was hunting and hawking for some, and others seemed to take most delight in going a fishing: the dainty walks, the delicate orchards, the flowery gardens, and the solitary groves, did invite many to a stroll, where, as the gallants with their ladies passed along, mayhap they would come to a party of country people, dressed up very famously, dancing of a morrice to the pipe and tabor, or on a sudden their ears should be ravished with a concert of concealed music from all manner of sackbuts, cornets, flutes, and the like pleasant instruments. Then, when they got into the soli ary groves, they should hear voices singing of a roundelay, and none could tell whence they came, which made them all marvel exceedingly. In the evening there was dancing and singing of madrigals among the guests; and some did act in masques marvellous well devised, and others played them on the lute, the virginals, and the theorbo, to the complete enrapturing of the whole company: besides which there were some of the best musicians who could be had for money, and they were placed in different rooms, and, when desired, struck up most excellent sweet music.

Among the company there came the merry Alice and her lovers, and she being desirous of vexing them as much as possible for her own especial amusement, did dance oft and very lovingly with Master Francis, and appear wonderfully taken with him; and he, with a courteousness that was natural to him, though his heart was not in it, at her requesting, did play the lover to her in jest, paying her such close attention as moved them all into a wondrous jealousy. Dr. Bashful sat himself in a corner, and would have speech of no one, he was so disturbed at the sight; others looked on exceeding melancholy and dejected: and Sir Narcissus Wrinkles, my Lord Wiseacre, and Master Aniseed, did get into such a rage, that after remarking unto each other the

strange familiarities of the young heiress with Master Francis, it was resolved amongst them, that each should send him a challenge, not doubting that one or other should kill him, and so the survivors have the better chance. The next question was, who was to take the challenge; and whilst they were debating upon it, who should come up to them but Master Shakspeare, whom they all knew; and they instantly agreed it should be no other.

"By Tartarus!" exclaimed Sir Narcissus, to him, "you are come in the very nick of time to do us three a marvellous piece of service."

"Then have I come at the properest time I could have chosen," replied Master Shakspeare, very merrily. "What want you of me, my masters? Hast got ever a message for a pretty woman? if so, I will do my best she shall like either the message or messenger, so that she should be well pleased to hear more by the same conveyance."

"Nay, it be a graver matter, I do assure you," said my Lord Wiseacre, with a monstrous serious countenance. "Jest not at Death, else he may make your wit come to a sorry ending. You must know that a lady of no indifferent comeliness"——

"By this sword!" cried Master Aniseed, interrupting of the other, "she be of such wonderful blessed condition that the enamored air feedeth on the delicacy of her most absolute beauty, as"——

"By Charon, she be the very sort of creature for any of us youth to love!" exclaimed Sir Narcissus. "And she hath given me such abundance of her favor as to tell me she could not abide men in general, but that a young fellow of my years was more entertaining to her than many others of riper age."

"And of me she hath said that the very look of my face maketh her smile," observed my lord. "And it must be known unto you that women only smile upon those they most affect. They that be pleased shall have reason for smiling."

"Smile!" cried Master Aniseed, in a seeming ecstasy, "never did the cerulean heavens in sapphire beauteousness shine out on this terraqueous globe, as did this paragon of prodigal attractions smile on me, while, to her ever-attentive ear, I poured out the infinite eloquence of my unfathomable affection. Nay, I would take upon me to swear, by the very everlastingness of my fantasy that she hath as great regard for the many inconceivable fine qualities I have made manifest to her, as you shall find in a rat for a piece of rusty bacon that has been a little roasted at the fire."

"Well, I dispute not what hath been said," observed the old knight, "but by Cerberus and all his heads! if she loved not me as any pretty woman might regard one so young and active as am I, then know I not what loving be. However, up comes this pestilent varlet, *Master* Francis"——

"Master Francis!" exclaimed *Master* Shakspeare, in some surprise.

"A paltry secretary," added *the retired* rat-catcher, with a look of monstrous contempt.

"A mere boy," said my Lord Wiseacre, disdainfully, although he was not many years his senior.

"By gloomy Styx!" cried Sir Narcissus, "if he be a boy then am I one likewise, for methinks we are much of an age: but whether or no, he hath had the abominable effrontery to thrust himself into the notice of Mistress Alice"——

"Speak you of Mistress Alice Throckmorton, my masters?" inquired Master Shakspeare, who now began to have some insight into the matter.

"You have her name of a surety," replied my Lord Wiseacre, very gravely. "A good memory misnameth nothing."

"Ah, 'tis the delectable she herself," added Master Aniseed, with a great earnestness. "The incomparable dainty sweet creature, who hath such superlative excellences of condition that"——

"And so we, being filled with indignation at his monstrous impudency," said Sir Narcissus, assuming a very fierce aspect, "have resolved to punish him as the fellow deserveth of us, and would desire of you, from us three, to challenge him to a combat of life or death, if that he do not instantly give up all claim to her hand, and take himself straight away from her society: and, by the god of war! you may tell him from me, he had best provide him a coffin, for I will leave him not while there be any life in his pestilent body."

"I will slay him outright," cried my Lord Wiseacre. "A dead lover giveth no cause for jealousy."

"He shall die before me like unto a rat after a dose of nux vomica," exclaimed Master Aniseed.

"But it seemeth to me you know nothing of this person," observed Master Shakspeare, very seriously. "You surely can have no knowledge of his true character, else would you as soon fight

with the devil as fight with him. For all that he look so quiet, there liveth not so deadly a swordsman in the queen's dominions. He is so cunning of fence that no man can do him any hurt. Indeed, I can say of my own knowledge, that a great fellow of a Frenchman, who had boasted of his skill at the weapon, he challenged, and after a few passes he left him dead at his feet. In private quarrel I have heard that he hath killed at least a score. Nay, I know of a surety, he be so bloody-minded that he maketh it a rule to kill all who oppose him."

At the hearing of this alarming intelligence the three did look infinitely uneasy, and there was a dead silence for the space of some seconds, each one looking at the face of the other as if he expected of him to speak; and Master Shakspeare gazing upon all, as if watching the effect of what he had said.

"He be nothing better than a paltry secretary!" cried Master Aniseed, at last, with a wonderful disdain, "therefore is he no fit opponent for a gentleman." And then the rat-catcher's son marched himself off very haughtily.

"I will have naught to do with such boys," observed my Lord Wiseacre, in seeming great contempt. "He that would be wise consorteth only with they that have wisdom." And away went he after a like fashion as his companion.

"By Medusa and all her horrid snakes, he be a murderous villain, and I will have none of him," exclaimed Sir Narcissus Wrinkles, in a sort of terrible indignation, and off he started.

When Master Shakspeare had sufficiently laughed at the success of his experiment, he went in search of Master Francis, whom, after some trouble, he found in an adjoining room, dancing of a gullard with the merry Alice, so gracefully, and with such spirit, that it was the admiration of the whole company. Upon the conclusion of it, his partner hurried away, as she said, to make Dr. Bashful dance with her a coranto, because she knew he could not dance at all. Master Shakspeare found no difficulty in drawing of his young friend out of the crowd, through the glass door, into the open air, where, as they walked together, he told him of what Mistress Alice's lovers had said of him, and how he had made them so marvellous fearful that they would as soon take a mad bull by the horns as meddle with him. Whereat the young secretary could not help smiling; for his companion took off their several humors so capitally.

"I congratulate you that you are on such excellent terms with Mistress Alice," said Master Shakspeare.

"Indeed, 'tis very good of her she should take such notice of me," replied Master Francis; "but she does it at present merely to vex these fellows who are after her, knowing that she hath a fortune."

"Methinks you have had a lucky escape with that Joanna," observed the other; and at the mention of her name, the youth's cheek became of a sudden paleness. "I must say I had a better opinion of her, for she did appear to me, although acting with great imprudence, considering of her acknowledged fondness for you, one of a far superior nature than the ordinary."

"I knew not you were acquainted with her," said his companion, rather tremulously.

"I knew of her but little, and that was before I had knowledge of your intimacy with her," answered his friend; "and though, from what I saw, I did tremble for your happiness, I could not believe she was so bad as she hath proved herself, till calling upon her father a short time since to make me a doublet, I found him like one that is crazed; and inquiring of the old woman of the house, I learned, to my absolute astonishment, that Joanna had suddenly disappeared, taking with her her things, and gone no one knew where. But the old dame hinted to me that there was very good reason for her taking of herself away; for that, to her certain knowledge, she could not stay in the house much longer without disgracing of herself and her family."

"Lost, misguided creature!" exclaimed Master Francis, with great earnestness; "how hath she fallen from that high opinion in which I once held her. I do assure you, Master Shakspeare, that there was a time, when she showed to me as noble a heart as ever woman possessed. She did me many kindnesses—many great kindnesses, and I could not but love her, she appeared to me of so loveable a nature. Alack! 'tis a most piteous thing she should have so changed for the worse, I have been monstrously deceived in her, and never will I put my trust in woman again."

"This is ill said, Master Francis," observed the other, seriously, "and I doubt not you will live to unsay it. There can not be a more gross injustice than the

condemning of the whole sex, because one hath been found at fault. Believe me, there is that excellence in woman which exceedeth your conception and mine too. In fact, her extreme goodness, her enduring patience, her wonderful kindness of heart, and the exquisite sweetness of her regard for the one she doth most affect, is a marvel, and will remain a marvel to the end of time."

Soon after this they returned to the dancing-room, where they arrived just in time to see the conclusion of Mistress Alice's coranto with Dr. Bashful, which every one had crowded to see, it was of so amusing a sort. There was the merry Alice, with as serious a face as if she had never laughed in her life, going through the graceful figure of the dance, with the young divine, one with an exceeding grave countenance, and with a habit becoming his profession, who, with his face in a constant blushing, his arms a trembling so they seemed about to drop from his shoulders, and his feet a shuffling along as though they knew not where they should go, tried to get through it as well as he could. His awkwardness was most ridiculous, and the gravity of his appearance not the less so; and as he occasionally heard the suppressed tittering around him, with a perfect consciousness that he was the object of it, he seemed as if he would gladly have given all he was worth to have been at the bottom of the sea. When it was over, he received the congratulations of his fair partner at the grace with which he had conducted himself, and heard the like praise from other ladies, who helped to carry on the jest, with a sort of hysterical laugh, and stared, as though he knew not the parties who spoke; and making haste to break away from the mischievous circle, he took himself out of the room as fast as he could; but not without first laying of his length on the floor, from stumbling over the feet of an old lady who was sitting down to rest herself.

Supper was served in the great hall, a famous large chamber, with a goodly roof of carved cedar, very lofty, and pleasant to look up to, and the walls hung round with old battleaxes, helmets, bucklers, and swords; and there were tables laid all along, and at the top was a raised dais, at which sat Sir Walter and Dame Elizabeth; and at each side sat the guests, a lady between two gentlemen, the whole length to the salt, which was as gallant a sight as eye could wish to see; and there was brought on every delicacy that could be had, and wines and liquors of every sort; and all feasted merrily, and the jest went round, and the laugh followed, and there was such a flashing of bright eyes, and such a wagging of beards, as had not been seen there for many a day. It so happened that, when the whole company seemed in the finest of possible humors Master Shakspeare, after filling of the silver goblet he had before him with choice Muscovadine, stood upon his legs, as if about to say something; and as he was well known of all for the noble creature he was, there was presently such a silence as you might have heard a pin drop.

"Methinks we lack something, my masters," said he, looking round upon the long lines of gallant gentlemen and lovely dames who were gazing upon his admirable countenance with mingled feelings of curiosity and respect. "We have been somewhat amiss in our behavior. Our worshipful host hath provided us of his own bountiful nature, with all things necessary for our delight, and with such store of delicates as must have been equally refreshing unto the eye as the palate. Yet, hitherto, have we enjoyed all and said naught. Mayhap, if you give a dog a bone, if he wag not his tongue he shall wag his tail, in token that the kindness be not lost on him; but we have had each thing that heart could desire, and we have wagged nothing but our beards. Of a truth, this seemeth not to be holding the giver of the feast in proper esteem. Under favor I would say, it hath but an ungrateful look. Another thing—'tis not unknown unto us, that our excellent and most liberal host goeth on the morrow on a dangerous adventure across the wide seas, and far away into foreign lands seeking of great perils, and having such great ends in view as, to those who know not the greatness of his spirit, seem impossible to be achieved; and yet no man hath said to him, 'God speed you!' Among so many brave captains and princely gentlemen, is there not one who hath such proper estimation of the pleasure he hath enjoyed as to be able to speak his thankfulness, or careth so little for him who gave it, as to seem indifferent as to his safety in his dangerous undertaking? I will not think of you so unkindly. I see a different spirit in your looks. Like enough, all are ready to do this proper office, but wait in hopes of one appearing

who will express their inclinations after a better fashion than could they of their own accord.

"Gladly will I do this office for you," continued Master Shakspeare, when the applause which followed the close of the last sentence, and plainly said it was him they wished to speak for them, had subsided. "Yet can not I help thinking that there be many of this noble company fitter than a poor player to discourse of the courtesies of so gallant a knight, and to give him God speed in such terms as so brave a commander properly meriteth; but I who have put so many speeches into the mouths of others, now must needs put what should have been another man's speech into mine own. If it wanted naught but friendliness in the speaker, methinks I could not fail in the speech; for I will allow of no man acknowledging a greater regard for his truly famous virtues than do I. Then, at once, I will begin by saying, as the mouthpiece of all present, that the entertainment we have been furnished with hath been of that princely sort which could not come of a less prodigal disposition than the giver possesseth. But as I can never hope to do it justice, I will e'en let it alone, only saying, that like unto the bountifulness of his hospi ality would we show the bountifulness of our gratitude, could we express the one as well as he hath done the other.

"And now be it known unto you, that he of whom I have been speaking is inclined to play the part of Jason, and is about to set off in search of another golden fleece. Shall we not pray for him and his adventurous band of argonauts, and hope for them success in their efforts, and security in their perils? If, to have for their leader, as skilful a commander as ever led men to victory is the properest thing to secure their fortunate returning, they have it. If an honorable mind, a courageous spirit, and a heart well disposed toward every one who shareth with him in the dangers, are at all necessary for their succeeding, they have them. If knowledge in all things appertaining to matters of warfare on sea or land is requisite for the complete realizing of their hopes, out of all manner of doubt they have it. In short they have, in their commander, every one thing that could at all assist them in making success their own; and none of us are there here who feel not satisfied that such success will be theirs. This being our farewell of this heroic leader, we must not allow the night to wane without the taking of a parting cup. Therefore fill my masters, I pray you, every one his cup to the brim, and join with me in drinking, with a true heart, to the health of Sir Walter Raleigh, wi h our earnest wishes for the prosperity of his expedition in search of the famous El Dorado."

Master Shakspeare tossed off his draught in the instant, and he was quickly followed by the whole of the worshipful company amid a very uproar of applause, and then Sir Walter did rise, and spoke very much to the purpose concerning of his thankfulness for the honor that had been done him and the like, and he launched out into exceeding commendation of Master Shakspeare, which was well received of all; and then he proposed his health, which was acceded to with great heartiness. And so they kept a drinking of healths till it grew into the morning; and at last separated every one with wonderful regret at the parting with Sir Walter Raleigh, but with an equal degree of satisfaction at the enterment they had received.

CHAPTER XX.

Whene'er the skilful youth discoursed or writ,
Still did the notions throng
About his eloquent tongue,
Nor could his ink flow faster than his wit.
COWLEY.

Now, by the gods, I pity his misfortune,
And will awake him from his melancholy.
SHAKSPEARE.

I would leave kingdoms, were I queen of some,
To dwell with thy good father; for, the son
Bewitching me so deeply with his presence,
He that begot him must do't ten times more.
MASSINGER.

SIR WALTER RALEIGH sailed from Plymouth in the Lion's Whelp, accompanied only by a small bark, because of the other ships and pinnaces not being ready at the appointed time, and he stretched out to Teneriffe, giving orders they were to overtake him there. Among others who had come on board of Sir Walter's vessel was Simon Mainsail, as chief gunner, and between him and Harry Daring there was presently a huge liking, because of the boy's apparent great courage, and his eagerness to be taught of all matters relating to maritime affairs, and of the old man's wonderful experience in such things. The former seemed of a sudden to lose his relish for mischief in the strictness of his attention to the gain-

ing of this knowledge, and he would go over every part of the ship to know its use, and be familiar with it; then he would handle the ropes and the sails, till he was as well acquainted with their application as was any; and as for climbing, he had scarce been at sea a week before he would ascend to the topmast yards with such nimbleness and fearlessness that none would follow him, and all were in dread of his falling. He seemed to like nothing so much as to hear the old mariner tell of the dangers he had passed; of the terrible storms he had seen; and of the fearful fights he had been in; and it appeared as if Simon Mainsail liked nothing so much as to talk of them. Often and often would they two get together, mayhap sitting on the breech of a gun, as the goodly ship was a ploughing the waves in right admirable fashion, and whilst the boy, wrapt up in the very earnestness of his attention, gazed upon the veteran's honest weather-beaten face, the latter would discourse in his homely yet stirring manner upon the great store of riches the Spaniards had acquired in the New World, and how many brave spirits had enriched themselves by plundering of their ships and sacking of their towns, till the boy, entering into the excitement of his companion, would cry out in the midst of the narration, "By Gog and Magog, what exquisite fine fun!"

"You see, Harry," continued the chief gunner, "these same villain Spaniards are the most treacherous craft as you shall find anywhere—they be the savagest, rascalliest, falsest set of caitiffs that ever warped out of this world into t'other, and it be but the doing of God's good work to sink the whole crew, if peradventure they could be met with in one ship. There be no telling of what horrid cruelties they have practised upon the poor Indians when they came aboard of them in their own country, from the which, being but simple, and not having so much as an harquebus among the whole lot, much less any piece of ordnance, the poor Indians were soon driven out, and rifled of all their gold and of every one thing they possessed. Well, in the wake of this the Spaniards built themselves fine towns along the coast of the Spanish main, which, what with the plunder they had of the natives, and what they got out of the mines—for I have heard it said that in those parts the earth be solid gold—they soon became so monstrous rich that they sent fleets of huge ships every year to Spain laden with bars of gold and silver."

"It would serve them but right, methinks, could any of our ships meet with such, and spoil them as they had done the Indians," observed Harry Daring.

"It hath been done scores of times," replied Simon Mainsail. "Nay, I have more than once given a helping hand in the business. Many of their tall masts have I sent by the board, and I have made such havoc upon their decks as would have been pitiful to look upon, had they been anything but the monstrous villains they be. Then comes the boarding; and I promise you I never lagged astern at that. I tell you, Harry, 'tis a wonderful fine thing to have sight of these galleons of theirs, every one with three decks, sailing along as proudly as if they were the castles of some prince or another, that would not consort with vessels of meaner quality; but presently we in our craft, that seemed unto them like cockle-shells to a Gallego boat, gave chase, and accosted them more familiarly than pleased their mightiness. At them we went with every gun as could be brought to bear, sweeping them into the sea after such a sort as they knew not what to make of; and then, if perchance they allowed us to get upon their decks before they struck, up we came clambering like so many cats, caring no more for their fire than if they had naught but popguns; and then there was such cutting and slashing and pistolling; driving of them here and slaughtering of them there; now on the upper deck and now on the lower; pinning them to the bulwarks with our pikes, or sending of them headlong down the hatchway with our pieces, till we had got the ship in our possession, and the captain had sung out for quarter."

"What would I have given to have had a share in such glorious doings!" exclaimed Harry in huge delight. "Indeed, methinks there can be nothing like the killing of Spaniards. By Gog and Magog! I am in a monstrous impatience to be at them, and if I kill not a score or two at least before any long time is past, I shall grow exceeding dull at heart."

"But you have not heard all, messmate," said the old mariner, looking well pleased at the boy's eagerness. "Having secured our prisoners, we had next to look after the cargo; and there we would find such a prize! The commonest things were solid cakes of silver piled in heaps, and ingots of the most precious gold in

the like abundancy; and, in overhauling of them, mayhap we would light upon bags of costly pearls, and all manner of rare stones, each one a fortune of itself. And then every man of us were so wealthy when we returned to port, that it was the difficultest thing as could be to find out what course to go upon so that we might spend it all."

"I'faith! if I were so rich I'd soon get me a ship of my own," observed his young companion. "O' my life, Simon! there be nothing I have so much desire of as to be the captain of a goodly ship like this; or failing in that, that my true friend Master Francis should be captain, and I next him, that we might, with a plenty of brave fellows and lots of muskets and swords, great guns and the like, go after these same galleons, and when we have peppered them famously, and slashed the Spaniards after so excellent a fashion as you have said, enrich ourselves with their gold and silver."

"Perchance that shall come to pass in good time," replied the gunner. "Under so noble a commander as is Sir Walter Raleigh, if you stand to your gun like a true man, you shall fail not in the getting of proper advancement."

"Nay, if I turn tail I would like to be pistolled on the instant!" cried Harry Daring earnestly. "I promise you I am none of such sort, whereof you shall have good evidence on a fitting occasion."

"I doubt it not, Harry—I doubt it not," exclaimed Simon Mainsail. "You bear up bravely; and to my thinking, would carry all the sail you could after an enemy—never asking of what force she may be. Though you be of small tonnage, I've seen many a bigger vessel I have had less hope of. Let your gun want nothing but the firing, and if your enemy spring her loof, let her not slip away for want of proper speed in the chase."

"If she slip away when I once have hold of her, I will give her leave," answered Harry Daring. "But what more of these Spaniards? Methinks I could listen all day to hear of them."

"Why, they be so preposterous greedy," replied the old mariner, "that they will allow of no ship of any other country trading in that part of the world in the which they have gained such store of riches: and if they but catch any sufficiently weak for them to overpower, they will presently set a torturing of them with such cruelties as be horrible to think of."

"Hang them, the villains! How I do wish to be at them!" cried the boy, seemingly in a very moving indignation.

"And to such mariners as be of England, they be dreadful inveterate against, because of their being heretics, as they call us," continued the gunner. "And nothing seemeth so pleasing to such abominable papists, as the doing of us all manner of treachery and deadly hurt. 'Slife! it was only last year, when Sir Walter sent Captain Whiddon on a voyage to the Orinoco to see how things looked for this expedition, there was a certain governor of these villain Spaniards, named De Berrio, in the island of Trinidad, who with a great cunning and cruelty, got hold of eight of the captain's men, whom he used after an infamous fashion, and would have given Captain Whiddon no better treatment had he succeeded in making him his prisoner."

"'Tis to be hoped he will now be well paid for it," remarked Harry Daring.

"Our commander be not of that sort to pass over such a thing," replied Simon Mainsail. "I doubt not Sir Walter will cut off his head."

"Hath he ever a son or two?" inquired the boy earnestly.

"Indeed I know not," answered the other.

"If he have, and they be but big enough, by Gog and Magog! I will cut off their heads too, if I meet with them!" exclaimed his young companion resolutely.

"'Tis like enough we shall have fighting and plenty of it," said Simon Mainsail. "For these caitiffs will, on no account, let us make way in Guiana, if they can help themselves, because of the exceeding richness of the country; and they will bear down upon us with all their force in hopes of driving us back into the sea; but our commander careth for them no more than do I for a maggot in a mouldy biscuit, and, I doubt not, we shall have such sacking and burning as will be a delight to see."

"'Twill be exquisite fine fun," cried Harry Daring, overjoyed at the very thought of it. "It be a thousand pities we shall be so long before we get to them; for, in truth, I do long for nothing so much as the killing of a Spaniard."

"Take heed the Spaniard kill not you," observed the other.

"Kill me!" cried his young companion in exceeding astonishment. "Nay, 'twould savor very much of the ass if I let him. I promise you I can now handle my piece as well as the rest—at the firing

of pistols am a match for any; and as for sword or dagger, if I show my back to an enemy, be he big or little, at such weapons, I will give up fighting, and get me back to Eastcheap for to be nothing better than a barber-chirurgeon all my life. A Spaniard kill me! Hang the villain, I should like to catch him at it."

"Indeed, if you get in the way of a bullet, you shall hardly escape," added the old man seriously.

"Escape! Dost think I would try to escape, Simon?" asked Harry Daring, as if like to be wrath at the thought of such a thing. "Hast that ill opinion of me, as to fancy I be of so poor a spirit I must need take heed of my life when there be a plenty of enemies to kill? By Gog and Magog, if you catch me doing of so paltry a thing as escaping, methinks I had better be made meat for dogs."

"In honest truth, messmate, I meant not you should take me on that tack," replied Simon Mainsail, inwardly much pleased with his young companion for the courageousness of his manner. "It was but my intention to hold out a signal to tell you, 'twould show but a proper cunning to change your course a little, if that a bullet should be a coming that way."

"I will change my course none," cried the boy, determinedly. "If the bullet go another way, let it go and be hanged! If it come at me, I care not to shrink before a thousand of them."

"But if you keep not a good lookout, you shall show no sense in it," observed the old gunner. "Suppose, now, I be the only one left at my gun, I see a shot making straight for my figure-head, thereupon I veer a point or two, and the shot goeth by harmless; then do I discharge my gun at the enemy and do them great damage! whereas had I stayed where I was, I could not help to be killed outright, and my gun having none to serve her, could be of no service against the enemy, who would quickly have had some advantage of it, and mayhap have taken the ship. So you see it be the duty of one that wisheth to be thought skilful in war, not to be rash, else not only himself, but his messmates may suffer for't."

"I will be no more rash than I can help," replied Harry Daring; "but if that I am to be ever a looking after the shot, there shall be no opportunity for me to a killing of any one; and in my thinking, it be more satisfaction to cut down a whole lot of pitiful Spaniards, than to be a jumping away from a few pestilent bullets. But I promise you I will give them no time to aim at me, for I will presently get into the midst of them, and commence slashing away at such a rate, now here, now there, and now in another place, that they shall be glad to take more heed of themselves than me. Would the time were come! I shall rest but little till the fighting commence. Indeed, I be ever a dreaming of the storming of towns, the taking of ships, or the like, whereof I find excellent entertainment in hearing of the clashing, and groaning, and shouting, and seeing heads flying this way, and arms that, and other pleasant pastime of the same sort, that when I wake and find I have killed none, I be monstrous down at heart at it."

"Be not out of patience, messmate," replied the veteran; "you shall take your own course in time, depend on't. There be no making a ship sail faster than she will, unless perchance you shall have dealings with those who have power over the elements, which I take to be both dishonest and unlawful."

"Think you there be any such?" inquired the boy, earnestly.

"There's no doubt on't, messmate," replied Simon Mainsail; "there be certain old hags as familiar with the devil and his imps, as am I with the breech of this gun. And having sold themselves body and soul to him, they be allowed for some period of time to do as they list: to command what wind shall blow, raise a storm, sink ships, and work such mischief as they have a mind to; and if you put not a horseshoe on the mast, or carry not a child's caul aboard, it be a thorough certainty that, when these witches choose it, the ship and all hands shall go to the bottom."

"What horrible villany!" exclaimed Harry Daring; "but methinks I have knowledge of some of these old hags. Hast heard whether any be ever troubled with a raging tooth, or ride on a high horse between two panniers of eggs? For then have I known some; and exquisite fine fun I have had of them too." And then he laughed heartily at the remembrance of how he had served the two old women, as hath been already described.

"O' my life it be no laughing matter, if you have angered any," remarked the gunner; "they be desperate in the doing of some terrible mischief."

"I care not," cried the boy; "I warrant you I will give them as good as they send, be they ever so familiar with the devil and his imps. Indeed, I care as

little for the best devil that wears a head."

"Hush, Harry, it be exceeding wicked to say so; how know you not the old fellow be a listening?"

"Let him listen and be hanged to him," exclaimed Harry Daring, fearlessly; "I say my prayers nights and mornings, and therefore will I take heed of none such. By Gog and Magog, if it comes to that, I would as soon kill a devil as a Spaniard, they be both such thorough-going villains."

"I would on no account have you say so," observed the veteran, looking timidly around him:—for though brave as a lion, he was as superstitious as the rest of his class; "he be ever stealing alongside of some of us, and giveth us a broadside if we be not on the watch."

"Then up and have at him again," cried the boy, quickly; "it be not the part of an honest man to give in to a scurvy devil. For mine own part, I know not what his weapon may be; but sword or dagger, pistol or harquebus, I am for him at any time."

"'Slife you will anger me if you go on so," exclaimed Simon Mainsail, with a countenance somewhat disturbed: "it be as easy for him to sink this ship, as for me to walk the deck. Now on that point I have made an entry in my log, which, may hap, it shall do you good to know of:—and this be it. You must know that there was a messmate of mine once, by name Jack Buntline, who was just such another dare-devil as yourself, only he had been launched many years before, and he had no more religion in him than you shall find in a shark's belly. Well, he was always a blowing great guns about what monstrous things he would do with the arch enemy of all true mariners, if peradventure he could have the weather-gage of him; and he often said he should like to get sight of the devil for a few minutes or so, he would soon make him mighty glad to sheer off. Now it so happened, that one night while he was upon watch, something he had got in the hold made him wonderful drowsy, and he was just a casting of his anchor in snooze harbor, when he felt a queer sort of a something a grappling of him on the lee quarter; at the which he opened his daylights pretty quickly, and there he saw what was enough to cast him on his beam ends in no time."

"And what did Jack Buntline see?" inquired his companion, unconcernedly.

"He saw Old Nick himself!" replied the old mariner, with a look of exceeding horror and alarm; "there he stood afore him with two great saucer eyes flashing fire and smoke; a huge pair of horns growing out of his head; a long tail that hung abaft, with a sting to it; two ugly hoofs instead of feet; monstrous claws, by way of hands; and all over him flames of blue, and red, and yellow. Now Jack hadn't a word to throw away upon a dog; he was as dumb as a fish; he hadn't fight enough in him to have killed a cockroach; but he sat stern on, with his jaw-port open, and his eyes a winking at the rate of fifty knots an hour. Thereupon Old Nick flew upon him, blazing away like a fire-ship, and was for taking him up in his claws: when Jack had sense enough to mutter a bit of a prayer his mother had taught him when he was a baby—albeit 'twas a long time since he had been on his marrow-bones; and at that Master Beelzebub vanished like a flash o' lightning, leaving behind such a smell of brimstone there was scarce breathing for it. After this Jack Buntline made no more boasting on that head, as you may suppose."

"For all that, I would as soon kill a devil as a Spaniard," said Harry Daring, and then walked himself away, to have speech with his true friend, Master Francis.

In the meantime Sir Walter Raleigh and his secretary were pursuing their studies quite as vigorously as if they were on land; for it was the practice of the former to devote so many hours a day to his books, whether he were on sea or on shore; and on all his voyages he failed not to take with him a choice collection of volumes. From this habit of his Master Francis profited much, for it did enable him to keep storing of his mind with useful lore; and the conversations he was ever having with his patron were usually of that instructive character which was the most fit to assist in the like object. Indeed, Sir Walter, not only of such things as he thought properest for him to have, helped him in the acquisition of those languages as seemed the profitablest to learn; but had that affection for him as to encourage him in his efforts at composition, showing where lay the faults, that they might be corrected; and giving him such commendation as looked the likeliest to make him renew his labors. Could he have lost all thought of Joanna, or have been careless on the subject of his birth, there can be no manner of doubt he would have enjoyed a very marvellous comfort;

but, despite of his attempting to dismiss the subject as being unworthy of a thought, the mercer's daughter would ever be foremost in his contemplations; and he would at last acknowledge to himself it was pitiful—exceeding pitiful, she should so have disappointed his expectations: and when he got a thinking of his reputed father, it grieved him to the heart to know he should be the son of such a notorious poor scoundrel as that Holdfast.

Sir Walter had been walking with him on deck, as was his custom, after, what was considered by both, the business of the day had been done, and, as was usual with them, they were discoursing together on such knotty points as might chance to come uppermost in their thoughts. From this there came to be some talk concerning of those who had distinguished themselves in any famous manner as commanders, which was ever a favorite subject with Sir Walter Raleigh; though with his secretary there were divers other matters he would have preferred the discourse of.

"Think you that war is not a thing in some degree to be lamented of all true Christians?" inquired Master Francis to his patron, when the latter had finished a very moving picture of damage done to the enemy in one of his campaigns abroad. "Methinks all this wasting and spoiling, this burning and slaughtering, is after all nothing better than the creating of so much misery and mischief, of which the world hath already such store, that it be scarce endurable at times."

"Doubtless warfare is attended with such effects as must be exceeding distasteful to a benevolent spirit," replied his patron; "but you shall scarce find one good without having in it some admixture of evil; and among evil things there shall always be some that are absolute and necessary; nevertheless have they an especial good purpose. War is a sharp remedy for an intolerable disorder—it raiseth a blister and createth great irritation; yet in the end doth it remove the inflammatoriness of the parts adjacent; and the peace which followeth is the state of health that treadeth on the heels of such powerful medicaments."

"'Tis a thousand pities all cause for quarrel among neighbor states can not be done away with," observed the secretary.

"'Tis a thousand pities all disturbances of the body can not be done away with," answered Sir Walter. "The learned Cusanus hath it 'Mundus universus nihil aliud est quam Deus explicatus'—the world universal is nothing else than God expressed; thereunto would I add, you shall see in one man the whole world in a small compass; for, as the universe showeth the greatness of the Deity, in one man appeareth the universe in miniature. There is in him strange passions and fierce desires, that are the rebellions of the flesh—pride and ambitiousness, the very tyrants of the body; and jealousies and revenges, relentless enemies that carry fire and sword through every vein: and these are oft the workers of such strife in the man as could not be exceeded in the world look where you will. It be these agencies that have a many score of times set the mind against the body, or stirred one member into the desire of overpowering the rest, with so desperate an opposition, that at last nothing has come of it but the absolutest rack and ruin over all. Let a man govern himself as well as he may, still shall something or another internally or externally put him in a disturbance either with himself or with others: so let a state be ever so properly ruled, it can not help upon occasion, avoiding of a quarrel either among its own parties, or with a neighboring kingdom. War, therefore, it must not be expected of any, can ever be altogether done away with; and wars against the enemies of one's country, or for the hinderance of foreign invasion, in my opinion is as lawful an occupation as any man could be engaged in."

"But surely the warfare of the mere conqueror hath no excuse for it," observed Master Francis.

"That is as it shall happen," replied Raleigh. "If be shall be a leader of barbarians and over-run a more civilized state, perchance he shall do but little good, unless as it hath come to pass before this, the conquerors being of a notable courageous spirit, mingling with the conquered, who may be luxurious and of an effeminate heart, produce, in a future generation, a people having the valorousness of the one and the greater learning of the other mixed into one harmonious whole; but when such heroes as Alexander the Great or Julius Cæsar carry the arts and arms of a more enlightened country into countries rude and untaught, they shall presently make of their conquests a great benefit, inasmuch as they spread abroad the superior civilization they possess at home. What degree of good followed the victorious achievements of the son of Philip none can say with

any great exactness of calculation, but that they were entirely unprofitable, as some would assert, will I never believe. It is, however, more notorious, that the Gauls and the Britons, to say nothing of other nations that were possessed of the Romans, did gain exceeding advantage by the dwelling among them of their enlightened conquerors. To come more to our own time, the conquests of Cortes and of Pizarro, though they might be attended with many very monstrous cruelties, produced wonderful advantage in increasing of our knowledge of the earth, making known unto us kingdoms whereof the skilfulest geographers were ignorant, and diffusing among a heathenish and barbarous people some insight into the religion and the arts and the sciences of a nation of Christians. In brief, it must needs be an evil indeed that hath no good mixed with it—war may be considered an evil, but upon proper scrutiny it shall be found, except upon rare occasions, to be attended with such advantages as must make it a thing necessary to the maintaining of the world in healthiness."

"Allowing of the necessity of warfare," said the young secretary, "which I can in no way help grieving at, it doth appear to me a monstrous sort of thing, that there should be companies of men willing to leave their own nation and take part in the brawls of another. Of such mercenary soldiers I think they deserve but little respect of their fellow-men. They fight not for their country but for their hire; and perchance they shall care nothing against whom they fight, so that they be well paid for it."

"O' my life, you are rather hard upon them," exclaimed his patron. "I have known as gallant spirits as ever breathed, which were such as you have disparagingly spoken of. Were not the ten thousand, of whose exploits Xenophon hath given so marvellous a history, of this kind? And surely none could behave themselves more like good men and true. In fact, it is a great conveniency when one's country is at peace, and there be no employment for its valorous spirits, which country, for lack of such, may become so ignorant of warlike accomplishments as to be made an easy prey of by some other state, for them to take part in wars abroad, and by such means improving of themselves in strategy and good soldiership, as to make of them all the more valuable when they shall return home. This remindeth me of something which seemeth a little to the purpose. I remember me when I went as one of the hundred gentlemen volunteers under my kinsman, Henry Champernon, sent by the queen to assist the Huguenots in France, of the chiefest among them was one Colonel Harquebus, who was some years my senior, and as proper a soldier as you shall find anywhere. He had, before this, served in the Venetian, and in the Scottish wars, to the obtaining of a notable reputation. Indeed I do believe he cared but little for whom he fought, so that the cause seemed to him a good one. He had travelled much, and had gathered abundance of information concerning of the characteristics of the many different people he had journeyed among, and few were so familiar with their different ways of behaving in the field, so that for a young soldier like myself there could scarce have been found a more agreeable companion.

"Our intimacy became the more confidential in consequence of our families having been very friendly for many years, their lands adjoining each other in Devonshire; and seeing me in some delight with his society, he did give me as much of it as he could. Thus it was I ascertained that his mother, who I knew to be of as proud a nature as was ever met with, being importunate that he should marry a lady of high birth and great fortune in those parts, for whom he could have no liking, he chose the rather to go to the wars, where he remained, making most excellent use of his sword wherever there was any fighting to be met with, or improving himself by foreign travel as I have said, to avoid a marriage he so much misliked. A most gallant heart had Harquebus. Ever foremo t in danger, he would seek the thickest of the enemy, and make such havoc in their ranks as caused him to be held most conspicuous in their dislike of us. The queen of Navarre had oft noticed him for his gallantry, and, with Admiral Coligni and the Prince of Condé he was ever a special favorite.

"I remember well, at the battle of Jarnac, which was of such great disadvantage to our cause—for we suffered a signal overthrow, and the prince of Condé being taken prisoner of the catholics, was treacherously murdered by them in cold blood—Harquebus had before the battle sent a challenge to the enemy to fight any of a like condition with himself, and a certain Colonel de Bombardiere did answer it. He was as tall and proper a man as I have seen in my time, and reckoned

the completest swordsman in France. Now, both of the combatants were well esteemed of their weapons, therefore it was agreed they should fight with swords only: and each was above six feet in height, brave, and soldier-like. After there had been some passes between them, De Bombardiere's rapier flew out of his hand, at the which he expected instant death; but his opponent quickly picked up the fallen weapon, and presenting him the handle of it, merely begged of him to be more careful in his hold. Then at it they went again, but the Frenchman was disarmed sooner than at first; and upon the getting back of his sword, with some comment upon his unskilfulness, he was so nettled that he rushed upon his adversary with more heat than cautiousness, and thereupon was run through the body. My friend also distinguished himself greatly in the battle; but his valor could not save the day.

"Afterward, at Moncontour, when we suffered a like disastrous defeat at the hands of the duke of Anjou, he did behave himself most valorously during the fight, killing of so many of the enemy with his own hand as would almost seem incredible to tell of, and in the retreat so conducting of himself as to bring upon him the commendation of Count Ludowick of Nassau, to whose ability and generalship we who survived the day were indebted for our safety. Of the six years I sojourned in France, endeavoring to perfect myself in the military art, I was kept in constant admiration of his great bravery, for he was of so valiant a spirit he could not rest a doing of nothing. He was blunt in his language, and plain in his apparel, and despised all who were not of the profession of arms; and he was ready to undertake any man's quarrel, so that there did appear to him no injustice nor dishonor in it. He was free and hearty in his manners upon general occasions; yet have I come upon him when he hath been in so melancholy a mood he seemed not fit society for any. Mayhap this was on account of his mother pressing of him to return to England to accomplish the marriage which she was so intent about; but I, liking not to appear inquisitive, did make no inquiry, therefore know I not exactly whether this was it or no.

"I met with him again in the force under Sir John Norris, sent by the queen to assist the states of Holland against the power of Spain. This was a body of five thousand strong in foot, and one thousand in horse, and they did great service in the Netherlands. Of these none distinguished themselves more nobly than did Colonel Harquebus; and upon one occasion, in the right famous battle of Rimenant, in the which we gave a complete overthrow to the Spanish army under the command of Don John of Austria and the prince of Parma, he seemed to excel all his former efforts. Before the battle we were joined by a Scottish force under Sir Robert Stuart, who gave us excellent assistance; but it did so happen that, coming into the field after a weary march on a sultry day, we straightway took off our armor and our doublets to be the more at our ease, and, doubtless to the wonderful astonishment of the Spaniards, fought them in our shirts and drawers. Now it be out of all questioning, that the success of that day was owing to the ardor with which the enemy were attacked by the English and Scottish volunteers, for nothing could exceed their determined courage and great discipline. At one time, led away by the heat of the conflict, I had got completely surrounded by divers of the Spaniards, by whom, though I was doing of my best, I must soon have been cut down, had not Colonel Harquebus, seeing of my danger, dashed in among them with so absolute a furiousness, that I was rescued in a presently, and just in the very nick of time to save me from their bloodthirsty weapons.

"Now the volunteers that did assist the suffering Huguenots, and those that entered into the service of the States, though they were what you call mercenary soldiers, and spoke so ill of because of their leaving their own country to share in the conflicts of another, were as honorable men as can be met with anywhere; and my friend that I have described to you at some length was a fair specimen of the class. For mine own part I think it no disparagement of a man, but rather showing of his sense, let him be of what profession he may, if that there shall be abroad better opportunities for the studying of it than at home, he seeketh to advance his knowledge by attending of a foreign school."

"I deny it not," replied Master Francis; "yet would I rather that all men should seek improving of themselves in such studies as give no provocation to anger, than be earnest in the acquiring of such skill as can only be used for the slaughtering of their fellow-creatures."

"Every truly philanthropic mind would say amen to your wish," observed Sir

Walter. "But while different governments have different religions, the people of one will in some way be prejudiced against the inhabitants of the other; and if such prejudice lead not to a war between them, it shall continue it with greater fierceness than can any other thing. There are a many hot-headed zealots who seem to think of their Creator as but another Mars, who delighteth only in sanguinary fields; and think the fittest service they can render him is the slaughtering of as many as they can of such as worship him not after the exact fashion as themselves. St. Bernard hath justly said: 'Frustra sperant qui sic de misericordia Dei sibi blandiuntur,'—they hope in vain who in this sort flatter themselves with God's mercy."

"But what became of Colonel Harquebus?" inquired the secretary, after there had been a pause of some few minutes, for he had listened with some interest to Sir Walter's account of him.

"By the last intelligence he was fighting with his customary valor against the Spaniards, who had come to assist the Leaguers in Bretagne," replied Sir Walter. "Yet I marvel somewhat he hath not returned to England before this, for his mother hath been dead these ten years, and the lady she was so eager for him to wed, hath long since been married to another; so that there can be now no hinderance to his coming back; but possibly the stirring life he hath led abroad for the last twenty years he hath grown so accustomed to, that he could not put up with the quietness he should meet with at home."

"Methinks 'tis marvellous strange there should be such a fondness in one man to seek the lives of his fellows," observed Master Francis. "He must needs be but a poor spirit who will not do battle with the enemies of his country when they are intent upon her disadvantage; but of the sort of satisfaction that is to be enjoyed by constant strife wherever it is to be met with, I know not, nor wish to know. I think he that be most worth the respecting is one that hath ever his weapon ready, but is loath to draw it save upon warrantable grounds; and employeth his leisure to gain such knowledge as may be most useful to mankind, whereof he shall essay to make it profitable by the writing of books and the like."

"If all were to write books there should presently be no readers," replied his patron, "nor can all have that inclination for study that will lead to the writing of books; nor can all books be of advantage to the reader when he hath such in his hand. However it doth oft happen that what is stupidly writ shall find admirers; or, as St. Jerome hath it, 'Nullus est imperitus scriptor, qui lectorem non inveniat'—there be no book so dull but it shall meet with a suitable dull reader. You should quarrel with no man for having his taste or disposition unlike your own; for if it were not for the infinite diversity of likings which are to be met with in the world, all mankind would be everlastingly set by the ears because of the insufficiency of what they most affect to satisfy so great a number; whilst of what they mislike there should be nothing but a monstrous wastefulness ever a going on, because there is not one who careth for a taste of it."

"Had I my will, there is none living I should so much desire to be like as yourself," said Master Francis, "for it must be manifest unto all that you are as excellent in the most admirable scholarship as you are in every kind of thing necessary for the statesman and commander."

"And why should you not be like me?" inquired his patron, kindly. "Do as I have done. No matter how many and how pressing be your occupations of the day, give but five hours to sleep, and six to study, and you shall find time, as I have, for the acquiring of a proficiency in such matters as some think me perfect in. I began life with no better advantage than yourself—scarce so much—for when I went with the volunteers into France, and had little beside my sword to help me, I was then but about seventeen years of age. However, by doing of what I have said, and throwing away of no opportunity for honorable advancement, I have become what I am. And why should you not be like me?"

His secretary did hesitate in giving him an answer, and seemed a little disturbed; and when his patron repeated the question he grew more embarrassed in his countenance.

"Supposing I possessed the wondrous talents you have shown, which can not be imagined a moment," at last he observed, with a manner that looked as if he were ill at ease. "My birth must be an insurmountable bar to my rising above what your goodness hath made me."

"You *will* have that Holdfast, then, for your father!" exclaimed Sir Walter.

"I have spoken to my uncle on the

subject," replied Master Francis, "and he hath assured me there can be no doubt of it."

"I had rather it had been otherwise for your sake," said his patron, with all sincerity of heart; then, as if desirous of changing the subject, he pointed out to his secretary the little bark that had accompanied the Lion's Whelp, breasting the waves very gallantly at the distance of half a mile astern, with all her sails spread out. Both watched her progress with exceeding interest, for truly it was a pleasant sight to look upon so small a ship—the only thing visible in the wide expanse of waters, save a few porpoises, nearer at hand, sportively tumbling about—dancing over the huge billows as lightly as a rose-leaf.

"She smacks along at a brave rate," observed Sir Walter, "seemingly as if she were proud of the adventurous spirits she carries. Well, they be noble hearts, sure enough, yet are they of the same sort of stuff as have been many others since the days of Columbus, who boldly dashed through unknown seas in vessels of no greater burthen."

"It seemeth to me, that for a daring spirit, the mariners of England bear the palm from all others," remarked the secretary.

"That do they, whether in the fight or in quest of adventure," replied Raleigh.

"The consideration of this hath put me upon the writing of a ballad," said Master Francis.

"'Tis a stirring subject, and I should like to hear what you have made of it," added his patron. Upon this his young companion gave a paper out of his vest (with some modest apologies for its imperfections), the which Sir Walter opening, did read aloud, as followeth:—

"Old Neptune rules no more the ever-rolling seas,
And from their ozier beds have fled the Oceanides;
And despots of the earth that sought to sway the waves,
Though they, like Xerxes, flung them chains, could never make them slaves.
The mem'ry of the ark hath vanished from them now,
And unesteemed the Bucentaur may bare her golden brow;
Whilst fearfully to port the Argosie must flee.
For the Mariners of England are lords of all the sea!

"A voice that pierced the world was shouted from the isles
Where Phœbus in his glory, o'er a land of freemen, smiles;
The Adriatic heard, and started at the sound,
The billows of the Bosphorus made each a loftier bound;
Far o'er th' Atlantic waste that voice in thunder roars,
And now the vast Pacific sends its echoes from her shores;
And every Ocean deep cries out, 'Come bow the knee,
For the Mariners of England are lords of all the sea!'

"No more shall England's foes her island throne put down,
Since Hawkins, Frobisher, and Drake, have proved she wears the crown;
No more Armadas now will come to work her shame,
Since Howard made 'th' Invincible' to wear a meaner name;
Nor shall her gallant ships fear all the power of Spain,
Since they have spoiled the Spanish coast and swept the Spanish main;
And dread of foreign rule in England shall not be,
For the Mariners of England are lords of all the sea!"

What Sir Walter Raleigh might have said upon the ballad know I not, for just as he had finished the perusing of it, there came the master of the ship to him on pressing business, and returning the paper to Master Francis, he did give up his attention entirely to the other.

CHAPTER XXI.

Aspasia. He has a cozening face—
You meant him for a man?
Ant. He was so, madam.
Asp. Why then 'tis well enough. Never look back,
You have a full wing and a false heart, Theseus.
Does not the story say his keel was split,
Or his masts spent, or some kind rock or other
Met with his vessel?
Ant. Not as I remember.
Asp. It should have been so.

BEAUMONT AND FLETCHER.

I'll drown more sailors than the mermaid shall;
I'll slay more gazers than the basilisk;
I'll play the orator as well as Nestor,
Deceive more slyly than Ulysses could:
And send the wendrous Machiavel to school.

SHAKSPEARE.

AFTER staying of several days at Teneriffe without being joined by any of his ship, Sir Walter Raleigh proceeded on his way to Trinidad, and cast anchor at a Spanish settlement called of the colonists Puerto de los Españoles, where to his great joy he found a part of his squadron. From the bay the town had a very goodly aspect, being of some size. The houses were principally those of the natives, and were built of wood very pleasant to look upon, with trees growing among them in great abundance, lofty, and of marvellous verdure. Some buildings there were of the Spaniards of a more stately sort; and the country round about seemed exceedingly inviting, stretching here and there into green pastures, with much diversity of rock, and wood, and mountain. Of natives they saw a vast number, but they

were at a great distance, and came not any nigher; but at the landing-place there was seen a company of Spaniards drawn up as if keeping guard, whereof were some stately fellows in long high-crowned hats with feathers in them, carrying of famous long pieces: seeing of the strength of those in the ships, they prudently gave them no molestation. Indeed, some of them presently got into boats and came on board, and Sir Walter had them treated very courteously, went amongst them himself, giving of them a plenty of wine and good cheer, of the which having been without a long time, it made them exceeding merry in a small space, and he talked to them in their own language inquiringly of Guiana—of the riches thereof—and of the bays and passages that were most practicable; making it appear all the while that he cared not for the going there, being bound for the English colony he had planted in Virginia; and the simple soldiers, charmed with his courtesy, not only told him all they knew, but all they had heard of, one eagerly interrupting of the other in some alluring narration of the wondrous riches of the place.

It did look exceeding picturesque to see those Spaniards grouped about on the deck, some a sitting where they could; one or two lying of their full length, resting of themselves upon their elbows; and the rest lolling wherever they might find a conveniency; their Spanish habits looking soiled and worn; their faces swarthy, with peaked beards, long mustaches, piercing eyes, and curly hair, all very black; every man armed, yet passing of the wine-cup from one to another with as cheerful a spirit as if such a thing as strife was gone clean out of their hearts; and Sir Walter standing amongst them—whose princely figure and noble countenance as much won their admiration as did the liberality of his spirit as evinced in his treatment of them—doing of every courtesy that could make them feel at their ease, the whilst he was dexterously intent upon the getting of such information as might be serviceable to him in his hoped-for conquest of Guiana. Close unto his elbow stood Master Francis, apparently somewhat interested at what was going forward, for he understood the language pretty well, and he was describing to two or three of the officers what was said. There was a strong guard of soldiers posted about the ship for fear of any sudden treachery, and the mariners were looking on from different places about the deck and up aloft, and if with some distrust, yet with a singular curiosity of their visiters.

A little apart from the other Spaniards, leaning against a mast by which he was partly hid from Sir Walter and those about him, stood a man, evidently from his long black habit, a priest of the order of Jesus. His figure appeared to be rather above the ordinary, formed in a mould more graceful than bulky, as far as could be seen of it under the ample folds of his garment. His face was mostly shaded by his arms, which were against the mast, but above them two large dark eyes peered out upon Master Francis with an expression so fierce and penetrating, that once seen it was not possible to forget. Ever and anon he would take a stealthy glance round the ship, doubtless noticing of all things there, if he thought he could do so without being observed of any; but if he saw the eyes of one upon him, he would on the instant the more shade his face, and seem intent only upon what was going on before him. There was a group round a gun on the other side of the vessel, at some distance, but not far enough to be shut out from a fair view of these proceedings, and it consisted of Harry Daring, Simon Mainsail, a rough-looking fellow with proper broad shoulders and body thick and short, whose right-ugly countenance looked none the handsomer for a huge scar across the face, who was no other than Tom Growler the boatswain—as surly a piece of goods as you shall see anywhere—and they, with divers others of the petty officers, were discoursing about the strangers.

"Methinks it be clean contrary to all rule and reason to let these caitiffs live," observed Harry Daring. "If they be the monstrous villains they must needs be being Spaniards, I marvel they should be so well treated of us."

"Hang 'em!" exclaimed Growler emphatically.

"Doubtless our commander is well advised of their true natures," said the old gunner. "He be not of that sort likely to venture upon a strange coast without taking soundings; and mayhap we shall find profit in what he be a doing of."

"Mayhap we shan't," muttered the boatswain.

"At least they seem proper men enough for killing," added Harry. "I expected not to have found such tall goodly-looking fellows. I do long to out with my tool upon them, and see of what stuff they be made of."

"They be dogs!" cried Tom Growler.

"Despicable papists!" exclaimed one.

"The very cowardliest villains that live!" added another.

"Wretched traitors and scurvy rogues!" said a third; and in a moment nothing seemed too vile to be said of them by any there.

"They say the devil may be painted blacker than he is," remarked Simon Mainsail. "But if you seek to paint any of these villain Spaniards, depend on't you shall find no color of a sufficient blackness."

"Hang 'em!" again cried the boatswain, in the very gruffest voice that ever was heard.

"By Gog and Magog, my masters!—it must needs be a good action to rid the earth of such!" exclaimed Harry Daring with a very marvellous earnestness. "Instead of giving of them good cheer, it seemeth to me the best thing they should have is no other than cold iron; and I for one would be well pleased to see they had enough of it. For mine own part, I think it be quite monstrous that these our enemies should be allowed to come aboard of us, each man armed as if ready to do us all manner of hurt, and only lying in wait for an opportunity to take us off our guard. How villanously familiar they be! Some lolling in this place, and some in that; and jabbering away as if there was either sense or honesty in their speech. I do hugely suspect those who can not speak honest English. There be no good in them, that's a sure thing."

"Never was and never will be," muttered Growler.

"But mark you that fellow leaning of himself against the mast," said the boy quickly, as he pointed out to his companions the figure of the priest. "Hath he not the very air of a skulker? See how heathenishly the caitiff stares upon my true friend Master Francis. Hang me! if he don't look as if he meant him some hurt. O' my life! if I knew for certain he had such traitorous thoughts in him I would not rest a moment ere I had clove him to the chine."

"I have seen many such. He be a priest," observed the old gunner.

"He shall be just as like to be the devil," added the boatswain gruffly.

"Priest or devil, it matters not!" exclaimed Harry Daring, seemingly somewhat moved. "His looks be those of a murderous villain. And see how he hideth his face! Mayhap he hath a hidden dagger with him, and shall be intent upon springing upon my friend and killing him out-right before he can be saved by any. By Gog and Magog!—I will have at him ere he hath time to do it."

"Not so fast, messmate!" cried Simon Mainsail, holding him by the arm as he was hastening away. "Seek not to do a man damage unless you have better warrant for it than his looks. He be a villain Spaniard, therefore would I as soon see him killed as look at him, but he be now under the protection of our commander, who could not help but be exceeding angered were you to run aboard of him. I like not you should get yourself among breakers. Besides, he be but a scurvy papist priest, and it be no way in the nature of such craft to seek danger there shall be no chance of their getting out of. I will venture to say he meaneth no harm, but should he, it be quite certain he dare not act any."

"Let him go hang!" muttered Tom Growler.

Harry Daring was prevailed upon to remain where he was; but not without much pressing and almost forcible stopping of him by his companions. In the meantime the Spaniards seemed more and more pleased with their reception, for Sir Walter Raleigh did allow of their bartering for linen, a thing of which they stood much in need.

"And is Don Antonio de Berrio still governor of this island?" inquired Sir Walter of one better dressed than the others who stood by him.

"Ay, señor," replied he.

"Perchance you may be able tell me his residence, for I have a great desire to pay my respects to him before I make for Virginia," added Raleigh.

"Doubtless the Señor Gobernador shall be found at the new city he hath called Santo Josef de Oruño," answered the Spaniard.

"Can I have any guide or direction as to finding it?" asked the other.

"The padre is going there, Señor Capitaine," replied the Spaniard.

"What padre?"

"Padre Bartolomé."

"Have you left him on shore? Can I see him? I should hold it in everlasting estimation if he would be my guide to your excellent governor."

"There is the padre, señor."

Sir Walter looked in the direction pointed out, and, for the first time, observed the Jesuit. He was now in deep abstractedness, with his eyes fixed upon

a crucifix which was suspended from his neck by a rosary of large beads. He might be nigh upon forty years of age, yet a face of so mild a character, and of so pious an aspect, seemed the gazer never to have met before. Maphap he was younger, for was there a freshness in his countenance that persons of the age that hath been stated, seldom have; and the flesh looked of such transparency as may rarely be met with save in those of younger years. Be that how it may, it is certain none could look on him without being possessed in his favor as he stood up close upon the mast, his saint-like head, perfectly uncovered, bent a little back, showing of a most comely neck, and his arms raised holding, as if with both of his hands, the crucifix before his face, while his lips delicately rounded and exceeding rich in color, were parted but a little, as if in the very act of breathing of some internal prayer. Sir Walter looked on with some wonder and much admiration, Master Francis also was surprised, because he could not help fancying he had seen the face before, yet was he in a huge puzzlement to know where—the group about the gun, despite of their prejudices, were awed into respect; and others of the crew appeared to regard him with a like feeling, whilst the Spaniards all of a sudden began crossing of themselves and saying of their prayers with as perfect a zeal as ever was beheld even amongst catholics.

"Salvé, Padre Bartolomé!" exclaimed Sir Walter with much reverence, as after a long pause, which seemed not like to have an end, he approached the ecclesiastic.

"Benedicte, my son!" replied a voice, the softest and richest he had ever heard. Still the eyes were not moved from the crucifix.

"You speak English then, father," said Raleigh, and not without some astonishment.

"Thou hast heard," answered the priest without the moving of a muscle.

"I would gladly have speech with you, reverend sir, if you could for a few minutes favor me with your attention."

"At the concluding of my devotions, which are now nigh unto the finishing, I shall be at thy service."

Sir Walter Raleigh waited with an exemplary patience, employing of himself in more closely examining the appearance of the Padre Bartolomé; but upon the very closest scrutiny he detected nothing which could in the slightest degree shake the favorable impression the first sight of him had created.

"Is there aught a poor son of the church can do to serve thee?" inquired the priest at last in such mild accents, and with so benevolent a look, that the other was charmed with him.

"Being in these parts," said Sir Walter, "methinks I should be wanting in proper courtesy were I not to seek to pay my respects to your illustrious governor, Don Antonio de Berrio, to whom I have heard you are bound. If it is not asking too much at your hands, reverend sir, I should esteem it of you mightily, would you be my guide and messenger unto him. I am about to sail for my colony in our new territory of Virginia, but I should be loath to go till I had seen one whose excellent merit hath been so much bruited abroad."

The ecclesiastic kept his dark eyes fixed upon the speaker with an attentiveness that made him feel he was before one who could look through the eyes into the heart; but he was not of the sort to shrink from such an ordeal.

"It giveth me pleasure to know that I can be of use to thee, my son," replied the padre with the same kindliness of manner as at first. "And his excellent lordship, will, I doubt not at all, be in a marvellous delight to make thy acquaintance, for he hath ever been well inclined to receive with a proper honor all creditable navigators that stop at his ports. I am but an indifferent judge if each be not greatly admired of the other. It will be but necessary for me to return to the shore to make such scanty preparations as will suffice me for my departure, when I will embark in this ship and bring with me one who shall pilot thee to our new city, under the sanction of the Most High: *a Dios*, my son!" so saying, the priest took his leave with a respectful inclination of his head, and Sir Walter, all courteousness at the finding him of so obliging a spirit, saw him enter the boat with his companions and regain the shore.

The good ship, the Lion's Whelp, had scarcely been cleared of her visiters, when, as her gallant commander was speaking to his secretary concerning of some private matters, up comes to him Harry Daring.

"Well, Harry, what want you?" inquired Sir Walter.

"Want to go ashore, an' it please you," replied the boy.

"Want to go ashore!" exclaimed his patron in a considerable surprise. "I'faith

that is a marvellous want of a sure thing, considering that you would go among enemies, and as like as possible get your throat cut for your painstaking. I pray you tell me what want you to go ashore for?"

"To kill a Spaniard, an' it please you," answered Harry Daring, with as much unconcern as if it was but an ordinary sort of thing. Sir Walter could not restrain his mirth at this.

"You are indeed in a vast hurry, and possess an infinite lack of discretion," at last he observed. "Why you stand not an atom of a chance at the killing of a Spaniard should you go ashore, for you could not help but get shot ere you could well land."

"Indeed, and if they can they may," replied the boy carelessly, "but I'll be hanged if I would allow a paltry Spaniard shooting me. An' it please you to let me go ashore by myself, if I kill not one or two at least, I will ask not to go again."

"Quite preposterous, Harry," said Sir Walter in an excellent good humor.

"An' it please you, I am quite sick for the killing of a Spaniard," added Harry Daring, with a dejected look, and with a more earnest voice. "I have clean lost mine appetite, I lack sleep wonderfully, I care not for one thing more than for another, I be in a most woful taking; and I shall break my heart an' I do not kill a Spaniard straight.

"In truth, you are in a very piteous way," exclaimed his patron, quite amused at the boy's impatience to be at his enemies; and then added in a kinder voice, "Restrain your eagerness awhile, Harry, and mayhap you shall have the opportunity you seek: but at present it can not be. Attend to your duties, When the time comes, if you distinguish yourself as I hope of you, I will see that you shall be properly rewarded for it."

Harry Daring was turning away looking monstrous disconsolate at what he considered to be his exceeding ill fortune; but stayed at the voice of Master Francis.

"Can you say naught in thankfulness unto Sir Walter for his goodness to you?" inquired he.

"Indeed, I be wonderful thankful," replied the boy, yet in his countenance looking nothing of the kind, "more especially for showing of so generous a spirit unto you who hath been to me the truest of true friends; but would he have the bountifulness to allow of my swimming ashore, for I need not a boat or care for a companion, carrying with me only a pistol or two and my rapier, I"——

"Sir Walter hath already told you his commands on that head," said Master Francis in some seriousness, interrupting of him, "it is not acting a good part to moot the matter again, and I shall have great cause to be vexed with you if you make angry one who hath done you such true service."

At this Harry Daring said nothing, for he always had paid most extreme attention to what was said of the other, but presently moved slowly away. In a short time, however, it appeared as if all trace of his disappointment had vanished utterly, for having dared some of the nimblest of the mariners to follow him, he rapidly ascended the yards, and after leaping and scrambling along the rigging like a very wild cat, from one part of the ship to the other, he at last got himself up to a point so high, and a place so fearfully dangerous, that his companions halted below with dread and wonder, and would come anigh him on no account, whilst he continued to shout to them all manner of taunts and bravadoes, and played such tricks as proved he felt himself quite at his ease.

Sir Walter Raleigh had said nothing to either of the young friends after Master Francis spoke, but he had listened and observed the two with a deep and lively interest.

"O' my life this barber-chirurgeon is as famous a little desperado as ever I saw," observed he to his secretary. "He bids fair to be of some note, but his too great hastiness must be put down, or he must needs be his own destruction before he is much older."

"I have feared that often, and have checked him as much as I could," replied Master Francis, "but he hath always been of this humor after any sort of danger or mischief, which he seeketh entirely heedless of consequences, and merely for the kind of sport he findeth in it. At present and for some time past, the expectation of sharing in the danger of actual warfare hath so excited him that he can scarce contain himself. Still, however mischievously inclined he may be, it is ever from sheer thoughtlessness. Although his tricks have often been to the great loss of some one or another, he hath not an atom of malice in his heart. He can not see any wrong in what he doth, let it be ever so full of harm; everything of the kind to him appeareth only

to be 'exquisite fine fun!' and that seemeth sufficient excuse."

"He wanteth only a little disciplining," said his patron, "he must be got out of that recklessness, which I doubt not will be no great difficult matter as he gets older; and then his valorous spirit will carry him forward wherever he goes. But what thought you of the Padre Bartolomé?"

"He seems exceeding pious," remarked the secretary.

"Few are what they seem," replied the other. "Piety is a cloak that appeareth to fit all who wear it, and beateth everything for excellence in the hiding of defects; and though I was somewhat impressed with the padre's spiritual countenance and benevolent manner, I now do suspect that when religion is made such a display of as was apparent in him, it is but the cloak I have stated; and concealeth something which appeareth so to be hid. I shall watch him well."

"At the first it did strike me I had seen him before," observed Master Francis, "but as I can not bring to my mind under what circumstances, methinks I must have been mistaken."

"Doubtless you have," answered Sir Walter. "It can scarce be possible that you have met before. But see—the boat is putting off with him."

Sure enough the priest was seen standing up with his hands clasped, as the boat left the land, with his face toward the Spaniards, who were now kneeling in a confused crowd on the shore, as if sharing in his parting benediction, and supplicating of Heaven for his prosperous voyage. In the space of a few minutes the Padre Bartolomé came on board the Lion's Whelp, bringing with him a dark complexioned man, in the dress of a fisherman.

"With God's good help I am here to fulfil my promise," said the padre, as he approached Sir Walter; "and here have I brought with me honest Tobias, who of all men hereabouts knowest best the navigation of this island."

"I am infinitely beholden to you, reverend sir," replied Raleigh; then turning to the other, inquired,—"You are well acquainted with the coast, my friend?"

"Ay, señor," answered the man, with a sulky look, yet taking off a rusty old hat, and making an obeisance nearly to the ground.

"And can undertake to conduct a ship safely to your new city Santo Josef de Oruño?"

"Ay, señor," replied the Spaniard, repeating the genuflexion.

"Take the helm, then; and if your performance be as good as your promise, doubt not of receiving a handsome recompense."

"Ay, señor," repeated the pilot, making a more profound bow than either of the preceding; and straightway went to fulfil his mission, as orders were given to weigh anchor. All the vessels being now in full sail, Sir Walter was walking the deck in company with the Jesuit.

"I have heard that Don Antonio de Berrio is governor of the right famous province of Guiana," observed Raleigh.

"Unquestionably is he, my son," replied the priest. "He hath ever been a dutiful child of the true church, and the virgin hath favored him as he deserveth. He married a kinswoman of the illustrious Quesada, the conqueror of the Nuevo Reyno de Grenada, and by the will of that hero, confirmed by a royal grant, hath become governor of Guiana, inclusive of the island of Trinidad and the mouths of the Oronoco."

"'Tis a most notable fine government," exclaimed Sir Walter, "and one that could not be placed in fitter hands than in those of so noble a gentleman. Methinks a space so great must require a vast force of soldiery for its proper security."

"Doubtless it doth, my son," answered the padre; "but I see but little occasion for soldiery, the governor being so much beloved of the natives."

"It delighteth me to hear that said of him," remarked his companion. "I suppose he hath a garrison at this new city of his, and if he feareth not an attack it need not be of any great strength."

"In truth no, my son, for he might do without, and no harm come of it," said the priest.

During this questioning and replying, the two kept ever and anon eying of each other's countenance as intently as they might, without exciting of any particular observation.

"Surely your pilot is bringing the ship too close to the rocks," suddenly exclaimed Sir Walter, as he noticed the gradual approximation of his vessel to a very dangerous shore.

"He is reckoned marvellous skilful in the conveying of ships about the island," replied the padre. "If I had not been well assured of his fitness, I would on no account have recommended him unto thee."

At this time Raleigh having cast his eyes around about the deck, met several anxious faces turned toward him, many of whom were his most experienced mariners, and it did appear, by their uneasy and gloomy looks, that they suspected some treachery. He gazed steadily on the padre; but the same calm and holy countenance beamed upon him as had so impressed him in the first instance. It was scarce possible for any one to distrust so saintlike a face: but Sir Walter did distrust him. Nevertheless he saw he had a difficult game to play, and in his own noble features exhibited no alarm.

"Methinks this Tobias can not be so well skilled, padre, as hath been represented to you," observed he. "Doubtless your good nature hath been imposed on."

"Nay, 'tis impossible any should have dared deceive me, my son," answered the priest; "I am convinced of his trustworthiness, and that, with the blessing of God, we shall in good time be safe at our destination."

"Will it please you to walk with me into my cabin?" inquired Raleigh, very courteously.

"I thank thee, my son; I am well enough where I am," replied the Padre Bartolomé, as if inclined to stay where he was.

"Nay, padre, I can hear of no denial," added the other, laying hold of him by the arm. "It is necessary you should have some refreshment."

"'Tis a strict fast with me, my son," answered the ecclesiastic, holding back, as it were.

"But I have matter of moment for your private ear, Padre Bartolomé," said his companion, more earnestly, as he still, in a very friendly manner, forced him along. The priest perceiving that he could scarce help himself, did as he was desired, and they left the deck together, as unconcernedly as if thinking of nothing in the world.

"I pray you be seated," exclaimed Sir Walter to the Jesuit, as they entered the cabin, and then suddenly added, as if in a wonderful surprise, "O' my life I have forgotten. Excuse me, padre, a brief space—I will return anon." He then left the cabin, locking the door after him, and hastily returned to the deck. Padre Bartolomé looked as though somewhat disturbed, and his large dark eyes flashed glances of a different sort to those that lately had given to his countenance so religious an aspect. He gazed out of the window, and noticed how closely the ship was approaching the rocky coast. At this he smiled; but the smile had a very devilish malice in it.

During the latter part of the time taken up with what hath just been described, Harry Daring was seen as if stealthily approaching the man at the helm.

"I say, old fellow, can you fight?" exclaimed he to the pilot. The Spaniard turned round to see who it was who addressed him; and observing that it was no other than a boy, merely scowled at him and said nothing.

"Come give us none of your black looks, Master Dingey," cried the other, "I heed not any such, I promise you. You be the first villanous Spaniard I have had speech with, and if you are in the humor, I would fain meet you whenever there shall be a fitting occasion; and I care not how soon, with sword and pistol, or any other honorable weapon; and I mean not to leave you till I have killed you outright."

The man stared at Harry Daring with a fierce and malicious expression; for though not knowing a word of what was said, he might gather from the undaunted looks of the boy that he meant him no good; and then, in a deep gruff voice, muttered the word "herege," which was calling him a heretic—a most hateful and contemptuous appellation in the eyes of any catholic.

"You are a very absolute villain and coward, Master Jack Spaniard; or when one comes unto you with a civil challenge, you would answer me in honest English. I shall feel a marvellous comfort in ridding of the earth of so thorough a scurvy rogue."

To this the other answered only by calling of him diablo, meaning devil, and grinding his teeth at him.

"By Gog and Magog!" exclaimed Harry Daring, raising of his voice and regarding the pilot with famous angry looks, "if you answer me not in honest English, I will give you a clout of your knave's pate." And thereupon he shook his fist. Then the brow of the Spaniard grew blacker than ever, and putting of his hand into his vest, he showed a dagger, making a significant nod, and muttering in Spanish that he had a mind to stab him; but no sooner did Harry Daring catch sight of the blade than, as quick as lightning, he bent down his head, and making of it a sort of battering-ram, gave the man unexpectedly so vigorous a poke in the stomach that it seemed to have sent the breath out of his body, and after

staggering back a few paces, he fell so heavily upon a coil of rope that the dagger was knocked out of his hand. In the next instant Harry was upon him, and then commenced a most furious tusselling between the two. The Spaniard cursing, grinding of his teeth, and clutching of him as well as he could, and the boy, who seemed as strong as a young lion, abusing him for a villain, and ever and anon hitting of him such hearty cuffs as was evident he liked not at all.

This could scarce go on without attracting attention. Indeed, no sooner was Harry Daring seen to rush upon the pilot, than all within notice of it came crowding to the spot, some hanging by the rigging, others clambering to wherever they might get a place to stand on, and all cheering and encouraging of Harry as much as they could. Some of the officers were hastening to interfere, but it came to a stop much sooner than was expected, for the Spaniard having regained his legs rushed like a furious mad beast upon his youthful adversary, who, stooping as he came, sent his head between the other's legs, and putting forth all his force, gave him a jerk that pitched him on his head behind him, where he lay stunned for some minutes. At this moment the voice of Sir Walter Raleigh was heard giving orders to put the ship about; the men returned to their duties; the necessary alterations were made in the sails; an experienced mariner was placed at the helm; and in the space of half an hour or less the good ship the Lion's Whelp was seen retracing of her way to the place she had lately left.

CHAPTER XXII.

Sir, be appeased; he is come to humble
Himself in spirit, and to ask your patience,
If too much zeal hath carried him aside
From the due path. BEN JONSON.

Nay, then, I am betrayed,
I feel the plot cast for my overthrow.
BEAUMONT AND FLETCHER.

In at the window, or else o'er the hatch;
Who dares not stir by day must walk by night;
And have is have however men do catch,
Near or far off; well won is still well shot.
SHAKSPEARE.

It was with exceeding astonishment that Padre Bartolomé observed the ship receding from the shore. He began to feel a little uneasy at his own situation, and paced the cabin floor with hasty strides, and with wild malignant glances. Nevertheless, upon the hearing of a footstep close at hand, he hurriedly sunk down on his knees, and began praying with wonderful earnestness.

"I have tarried not a moment longer than I could help, padre," courteously exclaimed Sir Walter Raleigh, as he entered at the door.

"I have not missed thee, my son," replied the ecclesiastic, after he had risen from the ground.

"But a strange accident hath fallen out that had like to have kept me longer, had I not done what I have," continued Sir Walter. "But sit you, good padre, sit, I pray you."

"I hope nothing ill hath happened," observed the priest, as he seated himself opposite the other.

"O' my faith! it might have been of great detriment to us all," answered Raleigh; "for upon my getting upon deck the whole ship was in a perfect confusion and uproar. I know not the exact rights of it, for every one I have spoke to seemeth to have a different account of the matter. But it appears that your pilot and one of my people had somehow or other got to giving of each other ill language, and Tobias drawing his dagger upon the other, they presently fell to blows, in which the former being cast headlong very heavily upon the ground, received such a fall that for the time being it knocked all sense out of him. In consequence of this mishap I have been obliged to turn the ship about, and make for the place whence we came, for I could no longer allow of the safety of the ship and crew being intrusted to one who seemeth of so hasty a temper: and indeed I am exceeding anxious to get him back with a whole skin, for he hath made all my people so incensed against him that I expect if he be not removed away straight he will suffer for it. I am sorely vexed at this, for that it will delay my long-desired interview with your honorable governor."

"Indeed, 'tis much to be regretted, my son," answered the Padre Bartolomé, regarding his companion with one of his most searching glances. "Tobias deserveth to be well censured for behaving of himself so badly. Alack! it doth make my heart ache wonderfully to observe how prone to strife are the children of one Father. What vile thing can there be in human nature that preventeth the whole world living as they ought in a universal brotherhood? I have strove early and late to destroy that hatefulness

one of another which leadeth men into such riotous turmoils; yet it hath availed me but little, in vain preached, in vain prayed for the removing of their quarrelsomeness. Ever have I gone amongst them on missions of peace and charity, yet have I seen of my labors no better ending than war and bloodshed. Oh, Madre de Dios!" continued the priest, lifting up his brilliant eyes to the ceiling, and raising of his voice to a tone of greater excitement. "Pluck from our sinful hearts these hateful passions, that with one accord men of all nations and conditions whatsoever, may bow down in thy worship, and glorify thy name with natures attuned by thy sweet influence unto everlasting harmony and love."

"Amen!" exclaimed his companion reverently. "Much pleased am I to hear of such sentiments; and doubt I not that if they were common, and were acted on by the different ministers of religion, one faith would soon pervade the world, and one feeling of love unite all mankind in a bond of peace that should never be sundered."

"Ah, my son!" cried the padre with increased fervor. "How earnestly would I strife to bring about so good a work. There are multitudes of my brethren who hold that a man can not be saved unless he be of the catholic church; but my heart can not consign to perdition so many of my fellow-creatures. Among protestants I have met with very many who without doubt were truly excellent Christians. They led good lives; they gave bountifully to the poor; they worshipped their Creator in all gratitude and sincerity; and that such are to be rewarded with the torments of the damned, seemeth to me incredible."

Sir Walter Raleigh now had some doubt that his companion was of the sort he had suspected. Ideas so liberal he had not met with before in any catholic, much less a priest: and he could never have suspected them in a Jesuit.

"I am afraid, padre, the superiors of your order would but little approve of such opinions as you have just expressed," said he. "Yet I am wonderfully delighted with your liberality, and shall have better thoughts of your religion for producing such."

"Indeed, my son, I speak but as I think," replied the ecclesiastic, with a look of very convincing earnestness. "It is true that many of us are not so tolerant; but the cell and the cloister are the last places from which ideas enlarged and charitable should be expected to come. It hath been my good hap to travel much. I have seen with mine own eyes. I have taken my opinion of men from themselves, and not from another party who may be either ignorant or prejudiced, and like enough give false testimony. The result of this thou dost behold. I can respect a man for all that he be of a nation with which mine is at enmity. I can believe in his worth for all that he followeth a religion which mine declareth to be damnation. I am not to be cheated out of my admiration of honorable conduct in deference to any unjust judgment of another, though he should be my spiritual chief and director in all matters of conscience."

"O' my life, well said!" exclaimed the other, diligently scrutinizing the features of his companion to detect aught of insincerity. Finding that the benevolence of his aspect altered not a jot, he was beginning to think more and more every minute that he had been too hasty in what he had done. "And so you have travelled, padre?" continued he. "Certes, there can be nothing like travel for the liberalizing of the mind. Have you ever been in England?"

"I have, my son, but 'tis many years since."

"My secretary doth imagine that he hath met with you."

"Indeed!" cried the padre in some surprise, then added with more indifference, "It can scarce be, for I left England when I was but a boy."

"I thought he had been mistaken," observed Sir Walter. Then there followed a silence of some few minutes, in which each was busily engaged with thoughts of the other.

"Have you resided long in this island?" inquired Raleigh.

"For some years, my son," replied the Jesuit.

"Doubtless then you must be well acquainted with the natives, their dispositions and habits?"

"Methinks there are but few who know them better. I ventured here under the favor of the Virgin, in the hope of converting of these heathens to the true faith. I have labored hard, and not without some success. Still I must in friendliness acquaint thee that they are in no way to be depended on. They are thoroughly treacherous and false at heart. Mayhap if thou hast speech with them they shall tell thee the most moving stories concerning of cruelty and oppression

suffered of the Spaniards, whereof there shall be no sort of truth: their only object being to create a confidence by the which they may better be able to rob and murder those who put their trust in them."

"They must be a bad set indeed if that be the case, padre," answered Sir Walter. "Nevertheless, it seemeth strange to me that none of them should come on board."

"Fearing of some mischief," said the priest, "I did exert my influence with the commandant to stop them from leaving the shore, knowing how inveterate they be against foreigners, and, worst of all, against thy worthy countrymen the English."

"Then am I under much obligation to you," replied his companion: yet still he had his doubts upon the matter.

"Mention it not, my son. I am happy that I have the power of doing a service to one of a nation I have ever had such excellent good cause to respect. I hope thou wilt tarry amongst us some time?"

"I know not how long my stay may be, padre."

"Hast thou any more ships besides these, my son?"

"I have; but their sailing with me has been delayed."

"Perchance they shall overtake thee ere long?"

"'Tis like enough some of them may."

"Be they ships of a force like unto this, my son?"

"Somewhat, padre."

"Prythee, tell me again what number of ships thou expectest to join thee?" said the Jesuit.

"I said not any number," answered Sir Walter, who now began to suspect that his companion had some object in his questions.

"Oh, 'tis of no sort of consequence!" exclaimed the priest as unconcernedly as he might, and on the instant turned the conversation into another channel. Each tried to obtain of the other such information as he required—the one concerning of the force possessed by Don Antonio—the other of the number of men and ships under Sir Walter's command; and each strove to mislead his companion as much as was possible of him.

"I have changed my mind as to going to your new city," observed Raleigh.

"The Señor Gobernador will be right glad to see thee," replied the padre. "And he will take it unkind of thee shouldst thou leave the island without paying him a visit. I should earnestly advise thee, as a friend, to neglect such a thing on no account."

"I will think of it," said Sir Walter. "But you are proceeding thither I believe?"

"I shall go by land immediately I get me on shore," answered the Jesuit.

"Is the distance very great by land?" inquired the other.

"Some few leagues, my son; but the roads are not of the best, and the way by sea being the shortest, I usually prefer it."

"When you see the worshipful Don Antonio de Berrio, present my duty to him, and say I be most earnest in wishing him all the prosperity in his government his great merit deserveth: and that if he come not to see me straight, I will do my best to pay him a visit."

"I will not fail, my son."

Soon after this the Padre Bartolomé and the man Tobias went ashore, but not before the latter had expressed in Spanish to Harry Daring, with a look that could not be misunderstood, that he would be glad to cut his throat on the very first opportunity; to the which Harry replied by an action more expressive than elegant, that the Spaniard could not help interpreting much better than if any language had been used, in what contempt he was held.

Toward the evening of the same day the good ship, the Lion's Whelp, being at anchor about the same place in which she lay in the morning, and a strong watch being set for fear of a surprise, Harry Daring being on duty, observed several boats leaving the land. These made toward the ship, and it was presently noticed that they were filled with natives. Upon this Sir Walter and his officers, being told of it, hastened on the deck having everything in readiness in case of any hostile intention on the part of those in the boats; but upon closer inspection, seeing that they were without arms it was evident that their object was peaceable. As they neared the vessels they were hailed, and one, in good Spanish, cried out to be taken aboard. To some who seemed the caciques or chiefs this was allowed, and presently, there came aboard the Lion's Whelp five or six Indians, most of them very proper looking men, though of a dusky hue, clad in little else save a linen cloth girt about the middle, a head dress of tar feathers very stately to look on, and a sort of cloak made of a curious stuff very bright, and ornamented with feathers and shells.

They came upon the quarter-deck where Sir Walter Raleigh was with his officers, and an interpreter which Captain Whiddon had brought from these parts on his voyage last year. The latter was named Ferdinando, and was an Araucan Indian from some place betwixt the Orinoco and the Amazons, and had been taken with his brother in canoes laden with cassava bread to sell at a neighboring island called Margarita. One of these Indians was a tall old man who carried himself very stately, and whether because of his being the chiefest among them, or the more experienced, is not known, but he acted as spokesman for the rest. He was called the acarawana or lord.

Upon being asked their intention of coming on board, he said that it was for the purpose of trading for such things as they could have, and that the reason of their not attempting it by daylight was, because of the governor having given orders through the whole island that none of the natives should go aboard of the English ships, upon pain of hanging and quartering. Upon this, Sir Walter Raleigh, who had had his doubts of the Jesuit, did question them through the interpreter, of the manner in which behaved the Spaniards to them; and the acarawana did reply right movingly, that Don Antonio had divided the island, and given each soldier a part, making of all the ancient caciques, who were the rightful proprietors, to be their slaves, some of whom he kept in chains, torturing of them by dropping upon their naked bodies burning bacon and the like: others of these Indians then spoke divers tales of cruelty and oppression which had been suffered by their countrymen of these Spaniards, till all who heard were in a monstrous passion at such barbarous doings.

Sir Walter then inquired of them where the governor was, and was told as the padre had stated, with the which he was informed that Don Antonio, upon hearing of the arrival of the ships, had sent for soldiers to Margarita, and likewise to a small place on the main land called Cumana, that it was known the padre had come straight from the very place he was pretending to go to; and that the way the pilot was directing the ship, was right upon the most dangerous part of the coast, it doubtless being his intention to get the vessels so entangled among the rocks that they must needs strike; upon which, all on board could not but fall an easy prey to the soldiers which should be brought against them. The hearing of this convinced Sir Walter Raleigh that his suspicions had been correct, that some treachery was intended him; and he did congratulate himself on the manner he had acted, so as to be able to rescue his ships from the snare without exciting the alarm of the Jesuit. This he knew to be necessary, should he have any design for punishing the governor for his malice, which had been his intention all along, and he forthwith began considering the properest way to set about it. In the meantime other of the Indians were allowed to come on board, and presently the whole ship was in the completest bustle ever seen—all were so busy a trading.

On the next evening the acarawana came again with many of his countrymen, and they were exceeding wrath because of the Spaniards having executed two of those who had ventured on board the previous night. Upon this Sir Walter sounded them as to whether, in case he commenced hostilities against their tyrants, he could depend on them for any assistance, which, when they heard, they made him the most solemn assurances not only of their co-operation in the island, but of the friendliness of all the different nations on the main land should it become known amongst them, that Sir Walter came as the enemies of the Spaniards; and when he promised them, that if he had of them proper guidance to the new city he would rout their oppressors out of it, they seemed so overjoyed they could scarce speak, and said they were ready on the instant to do whatever he should desire of them.

Matters being so far favorable, the officers of the ships were called together into his cabin to consult with their commander as to the best measures to be pursued at this crisis of their affairs; and then Sir Walter reminded them of how treacherously this Don Antonio de Berrio had entrapped eight of Captain Whiddon's men in his voyage last year—how he had with devilish cunning, endeavored to cast away their vessels upon the rocks for the purpose of the more easily attacking them with his soldiers, and with what extreme cruelty he did torment the poor natives to get from them where they had concealed their treasures. Then he stated, as it was not possible to pass the Orinoco in his ships, he must leave them behind him some four or five hundred miles, whilst he got along as he best might in the small boats, which could

never be done with any safety to the former, should he leave a garrison at his back, who were anxious to spoil his enterprise, and, as he had heard of the Indians, were in daily expectations of great supplies out of Spain. Believing too, as he could not help doing, that the Spaniards would plot his overthrow as soon as they could do it with any chance of success, he stated it was safest to come upon them unawares before they could hatch their schemes; and he doubted not at all of being able to give them so absolute an overthrow as should sufficiently punish them for their villany.

This was marvellously well liked of all the captains, for there was scarce one there who did not burn with impatience to be at the Spaniards; and it was soon agreed that the following evening a strong force should be secretly got ready to attack the settlement before them, whence it was immediately to proceed to the new city San Josef de Oruño, to endeavor to take the governor prisoner. In consequence of this resolve, all who belonged to the expedition were as joyful as such brave spirits could be, their dislike of the Spaniards was so great; and every one was wanting to be of the party; but as it was necessary some must be left behind to take care of the ships, many of those who were the readiest to volunteer were hugely disappointed, because of their ill fortune in not being allowed to go with the others. It may readily be believed that of all who were in delight of the approaching encounter was there none so well pleased as Harry Daring. When he heard of it he flung his cap up in the air, and hurraed and jumped about as if he were crazed with joy. The evening before he could sleep nothing, because of his thinking so much of what he would do when the fighting began, and the exquisite fine fun he should have in it. He would scarce allow Master Francis, who slept with him to get a wink, he kept so continually asking of him how such and such a great knight's esquire had behaved when he first ventured into battle, and a many more of questions to the like purpose, whereof the other at first gave him such answers as seemed to inflame his humor the more, for he straightway waxed so wonderfully inquisitive on all warlike matters, that Master Francis got tired of it, and was obliged to tell him pretty sharply to hold his prate, for that he could get no sleep for him. In the morning, as soon as might be, he was found in an out-of-the-way corner practising with one of the most experienced swordsmen in the ship the cunningest cuts that he knew of, and it was exceeding fair diversion to observe how earnestly the boy set about his lesson, evidently taking such huge delight in it as showed he had a greater liking for such things than he had found when he was apprentice to the barber chirurgeon in East Cheap. As the time drew on he grew more impatient. He must needs sharpen his sword to make it cut well—then he would polish up his piece and oil the lock, so that it should not miss fire.

Sir Walter Raleigh, who had taken great note of him, came up with Master Francis as Harry was busy in the steerage getting ready his accoutrements, assisted by a young Indian, whose affections he had gained by cudgelling of a big fellow who had been using of him ill, jeering him and playing him all manner of shameful tricks, ever since which Harry had acted toward him as a sort of patron, and would allow him to be despisingly used on no account. This youth, though dressed as an humble ship-boy, had a manner with him of wonderful courteousness. His face, albeit his complexion was of the darkest, was not uncomely, and his eyes were exceeding bright and expressive; indeed, there was often noticed in him, for all he seemed so simple and humble at other times, a look of pride and haughtiness, that did the more draw on him the uncivil remarks of some of his companions. He had been brought to England by Captain Whiddon; and being of Guiana, and of an intelligent nature, it was thought he might be of service in the present adventure.

"Now, Snowball," exclaimed Harry Daring, as he was loading of his piece and the other was looking on with wondering eyes, "you see, having cleaned the barrel and oiled the lock as well as I may, I presently put in powder, for there shall be no going off of the piece at any time unless there be powder in it."

"Deara me!" cried the boy, looking from the gun to its possessor with unfeigned astonishment and admiration.

"Then, Snowball," continued Harry with the like importance of manner, "I put me in this bullet, for it be a sure thing there shall be no killing of any one unless there be a bullet with the powder."

"Oh, my!" said the other, after the same wondering fashion as at first; for it seemed a very marvellous thing to the simple Indian.

"The which done, I next place a pinch of the powder in the pan, for if that be not done it shall be of no use to you to load your piece at all."

"Dat *very* strange! Massa Harry," exclaimed the boy with more wonder than ever.

"Then, supposing you to be one of those villanous caitiffs the Spaniards," continued his companion, as he raised the weapon to his shoulder and pointed the barrel toward the young Indian. "I take aim at you thus—intending to have the killing of you on the instant."

"No, Massa Harry, you no killa me, if you please, sar!" cried the youth, as he shrunk down in some affright and looked imploringly toward the other. "You beat him big fellar cause him kicka me and pincha me. You no hurt poor Indian boy. You no killa me, Massa Harry?"

"Hullo, sir, what mischief have you in hand now?" inquired Sir Walter somewhat angrily, as he caught the piece out of Harry's hold.

"Surely you meant not any harm," said Master Francis, though he marvelled prodigiously at finding of the two in such a situation.

"Nay, o' my life I intended not to shoot him," exclaimed Harry Daring with extreme earnestness, "I was but showing of him how to manage his piece."

"No, no,—Massa Harry no mean to killa me, I tank you, sar," cried the young Indian, upon whom it was evident some pains had been at for the instructing of him in politeness. "He beat him big fellar cause him kicka me and pincha me, if you please, sar; he no hurt poor Indian boy, I tank you, sar."

"O' my word it looked exceeding like intent to kill," said Raleigh; "but it matters not, so that it be no worse than it is."

"If it please you, I was but showing the boy the right proper manner in which I purposed serving out the Spaniards," observed Harry Daring.

"But how know you you are to be allowed to join the attacking party?" inquired Sir Walter.

"By Gog and Magog, an' I be not allowed, I shall go stark mad!" exclaimed Harry, very earnestly; and he looked utterly dismayed at the thought of being kept away.

"I'faith that must never be," replied his patron, with a smile; "or else, if it must needs be that you go mad, methinks 'twould be as well, were you to bite a few that would lag astern, when the enemy are before them; and mayhap they shall be none the worse for it. But if I let you go, will you promise me to be obedient to all orders, and never to move from the place you are put in till I shall think there be occasion?"

"If it please you I will promise anything, so that two things be allowed me," said Harry Daring in a more cheerful tone.

"And what may you require?" inquired Sir Walter.

"First that my place be by the side of my true friend Master Francis; so that if any of those villanous caitiffs seek for to do him a mischief, I may, on the instant, cut off their knaves' heads for them."

"Granted," cried Sir Walter, seeming much delighted at the hearing of such a request.

"And next, should I have the good hap to meet with that monstrous poor worsted rogue that drew his dagger upon me, merely for giving him a civil challenge to fight, that I should have the killing of him for my own particular pastime."

"For the granting of that I am not so ready," replied Raleigh; "I think he is no fit match for you. He is a man grown, seemeth strong and cunning, and doubtless hath had much experience in his weapon. Depend on't, if he is found in arms, and maketh much resistance, he shall be well cared for by those who are better able to do it than are you."

"Say you not so if it please you, sir," asked the boy, imploringly; "my heart be set upon the killing of him; and as for his being a man grown, I care for it not a fig's end. He be but an ass, sir, I do assure, for he hath not the sense to speak honest English."

"Let Massa Harry killa him, if you please, sar," said the young Indian, very urgently, as he lifted up his expressive eyes unto the face of Sir Walter. "Massa Harry brave as lion. He beat him big fellar, 'cause him kicka me and pincha me, I tank you, sar."

"I think in this case, a conditional promise might be given, without hurt to any," here observed Master Francis to Sir Walter. "It may be, as circumstances shall direct, with proper caution attending it, as should save Harry from all dangerous consequences."

"Hang dangerous consequences! Master Francis," exclaimed Harry Daring, with his customary undauntedness. "I care not for such, I promise you. It be enough for me to look at what I be about,

without heeding what shall come of it. Let me have but the getting of this rombustious fellow weapon to weapon, where all shall be as fair for one as for t'other, and if I let him get the better of me, I will e'en stick to a barber's pole for the rest of my days, deeming myself deserving of no better weapon. Not to say that it be one in any way to be despised; for I have had good service with it, as when I paid out that valorous knight of the brazen countenance, for drawing of his monstrous tool upon me, because, when breathing of a vein for him, I could find no more blood in him than you shall get from a cabbage-leaf."

The saying of this made Sir Walter exceeding curious to know more of the matter; but when, upon inquiring, he heard the boy relate the whole story of how, upon his first attempt in the breathing of a vein, he had cut, and cut, and cut Captain Bluster in the arm, to no manner of purpose—the rage of the patient—the deadly combat which ensued, and the overthrow of the valorous captain, he did laugh as if he would never have done. And so droll was Harry Daring in describing the whole scene, that Master Francis was more amused than when he first heard it; and the Indian kept showing of his ivory teeth, and grinning as though nothing could have so tickled his fancy.

"Well, if you can make such effective use of a barber's pole, I doubt not of your being able to do as much with more creditable weapons," observed Sir Walter, after his mirth had a little subsided; "therefore, supposing you shall come up with this Tobias, as I think he is called, provided it can be made manifest to me, he shall have no unfair advantage of you, I will allow of your giving him battle; and you shall be assured of my earnest wishes for coming off victorious in the encounter."

At this Harry Daring began a jumping about as if he was out of his wits for joy. In truth he was of a simple artless nature, for all that he was oft so mischievously disposed—doing naught from malice, as hath already been represented, but merely from the love of sport. He had not the heart to hurt a fly, unless perchance he should find a big fly a bullying of a smaller one, and then he would presently settle the matter after a fashion that showed he had the very properest sense of justice. Sir Walter having expressed himself as hath been described, gave notice that the attack was to be made that very evening as soon as it became dark, which being made known throughout all the ships put every one into getting of himself ready for the conflict. When the hour appointed had arrived, and it was thought that all was still upon shore, the boats being got ready, the different captains with about a hundred soldiers and such mariners as were necessary, did leave their ships without any noise. The feelings with which Harry Daring steps into the vessel that was to bear him unto his enemies are not easy of description. Suffice it to say, that he was in a monstrous impatience, and did plant himself as near to that part of the boat he expected would first touch the land as he could, from a device of his own, which will be seen anon. Presently they all glided along the water never a one saying a word, Sir Walter Raleigh's own barge taking the lead, in which was Harry, and Master Francis, and such of the ship's company as the barge would hold, all armed to the teeth; and the other boats lay as close to her as they could get, using of their oars so dexterously as to make no great splashing, so as in any way to alarm the Spaniards. The night was somewhat of the darkest, but that was all the better for their enterprise, as they looked to surprise the *corps de garde* to prevent them from sending off any intelligence to the governor.

Scarcely had Sir Walter's barge touched the shore when Harry Daring sprung out of it before any one entertained a suspicion of what he intended, and leapt upon land the first of all. He was quickly followed by the rest with as little noise as could be, and Sir Walter giving some orders to his officers to keep the men together, marched them off. They passed several buildings, of what sort they knew not because of the darkness, and made direct for the guard-house, which was marked out to them by a strong light burning within. This they surrounded on all sides so as to prevent every chance of escape. There was a sentinel at the door, but he was so fast asleep leaning against a post, that he saw not and heard not aught of what was going on around him. He was not disturbed of any, but was allowed to snore where he was, which he did in very earnest fashion. An open window stood a little above the ground, and Sir Walter causing Harry Daring to be lifted in the arms of the tallest man, the boy gave note of what he saw within. There were the Spaniards lying of their lengths on the floor,

all fast asleep, their pieces were piled up in a corner of the room, and their swords hung against the wall. What to do was next to be considered. The sentinel lay across the door as it were, resting of his back against one post, and his feet against the opposite. He seemed to grasp his piece so tight that there appeared to be no getting it away from him without his crying out, nor could there be any passing of him without moving him in such a manner that he should wake on the instant. The casement was somewhat too high from the ground to be easily got at. However, it was determined, come what would, that as many as could should get in at the window, whilst others should remove the sentinel, kill him if he sought to give the alarm, and rush in at the door.

No sooner had Harry Daring heard of this arrangement than he leapt from the man's shoulders on which he had climbed, scrambled quickly up to the casement, and quietly dropped himself down into the room. There was he among the enemies he had so longed to grapple with; but every man of them seemed to be a sleeping soundly, and he could not think of attacking a sleeping foe. He examined them by the light which burned in the chamber, and, as he was intent upon this, who should he discover amongst them but his old antagonist Tobias, not dressed as a fisherman, as he was when aboard of the Lion's Whelp, but in the habit of a soldier. He had scarce made this discovery when he observed the man's eyes open, and, for a single moment glaring at him with the ferocity of a tiger, Tobias jumped on his feet with a scream of exultation, and made for the place where the harquebuses were piled: but Harry, who saw there was no time to be lost, levelled his piece at him, and laid him his length on the floor. The report of this roused the sleepers, but they seemed all taken with a sudden phrensy, running this way and that, making a strange wild outcry, and jostling against each other as if they knew not what they were about. Now, as quick as could be, one man dropped from the window, and then another, and at the same time there was heard the shout of the sentinel, a rushing at the door, and the hurra of Sir Walter's soldiers, for whom at this time silence could do no good.

Harry Daring, as soon as he had brought down Tobias, did himself haste to the place where the arms were piled, and drawing of his hanger, slashed about with right good will, so that the whole company of Spaniards made at him with their rapiers for to get at their fire-arms, their numbers did so incommode each other, and Harry did use his weapon with such nimbleness, that he kept them at bay, giving a many fearful cuts to such as ventured within his reach, till some of Sir Walter's men jumping in at the window, and others rushing in at the door, at once bore down all opposition, and then the Spaniards straightway fell on their knees, imploring very lustily for quarter—which was granted them by the victors. Of the Englishmen there was none hurt, but of the Spaniards there were six killed, beside several wounded. Leaving these last to the surgeon, and securing of his prisoners, Sir Walter Raleigh sent one of his captains with sixty soldiers, guided by an Indian, whilst he followed with forty more, to look after Don Antonio de Berrio in his new city, San Josef de Oruño.

CHAPTER XXIII.

I am another woman;—till this minute
I never lived, nor durst think how to die,
How long have I been blind? Yet on the sudden
By this blest means, I feel the films of error
Ta'en from my soul's eyes.

MASSINGER.

Never have unjust pleasures been complete
In joys entire: but still fear kept the door,
And held back something from that vale of sweet,
To intersour unsure delights the more.
For never did all circumstances meet
With those desires that were conceived before,
Something must still be left to cheer our sin,
And give a touch of what should not have been.

DANIELL.

In a handsome chamber of the governor of Guiana well lighted, and decked with such costly furniture as might become the dwelling of a sovereign prince, there sat a right beautiful woman in a dress in the Spanish style, of exceeding rich materials. She was reclining on a silken couch figured in with gold in a wonderful costly pattern, supporting herself by pillows of the same, and was leaning of her head back upon her hand, whilst her elbow rested on the cushions behind her. Her eyes were somewhat dark and marvellously lustrous, her face very lovely to look upon; yet the expression on it was of so gloomy and disturbed a nature, mingling great grief with great anger, that there would be few so hazardous as to venture to gaze thereon with any sort of affection, notwithstanding of

its great comeliness. Her form was truly beautiful, showing she was a woman arrived at the very maturity of her attractions. The outline of her limbs was fully rounded; whilst her spreading shoulders and swelling bosom were of a corresponding character.

Doubtless was she wondrously moved by her own reflections, for her breast heaved violently, and the glances that shot from her brilliant eyes were not such as betokened a mind at ease. After continuing to look more moodily every moment, and starting every now and then from her position with a sort of half-stifled sob, she rose from her seat, and began pacing of the room with haughty strides. The whilst she was at this a door opened; and there entered a stately looking man, habited in all the proud apparelling of a Spanish noble. His age might be somewhere about forty. He was well featured, yet had he in his countenance a sort of scornfulness that ever and anon gave his countenance an expression in no way amiable. Even when he was striving for to inspire confidence and affection, he had so much of guile in his look, that few could be deceived by it. An experienced observer could not fail, should he be long in his company, of seeing in him the selfish sensualist and the cruel despot. On the noise of the door opening the lady turned round, and noticing who entered, she seemed to make a struggle with herself; her look was not so gloomy, but still it was much disturbed.

"Ah! my adored!" exclaimed the gentleman as he advanced toward her with an easy carriage, and a face dressed in smiles. "I have hastened to thee from a thousand pressing duties; but when love beckons all else may stay behind. How fares it with thee, señora? Thy looks scarce welcome me. Is there aught I have neglected providing thee with?—any one thing thou hast the desire of? Nay, by the Virgin, thou usest me but unkindly if thou hast any wish ungratified."

"I lack nothing, Don Antonio," said the señora faintly, as she moved from him as if to hide her feelings.

"O' my life 'tis but uncivil of thee to turn away," observed the governor, as he went up to her and took her hand, gazing in her face all the time with very passionate admiration. "For art thou not the very light of mine eyes? Do I not love thee, doña?"

"Love?" cried his fair companion with a sort of sarcastic emphasis.

"Ay, love, Querida!" replied de Berrio. "And well art thou worthy of such. Madre de Dios! I shall think better of heretics for thy sake, and I shall ever hold the worthy padre's piety in greater estimation, because he hath secured so delectable a sinner for the consoling of so good a catholic as am I."

"Mention him not!" exclaimed the lady somewhat fiercely. "He is a wretch, upon whom to waste a thought would be a waste indeed. He is a villain—a very absolute villain. A traitor—a thorough black-hearted hppocrite—the very completest wretch that ever disgraced the name of humanity. I scorn and loathe and detest him from out of the very depths of my heart."

"Give him not such hard words, I prythee," said Don Antonio, seemingly a little surprised at the earnestness with which she had spoke. "As times go, methinks he is none so bad. For mine own part, I see nothing in him worse than shall be met with in most of our holy men. He is a marvellous fine preacher, and is altogether so skilled in the knowledge of human hearts, that he hath ofttimes been employed by our government on the delicatest missions. What hath he done amiss?"

"What hath he done amiss?" echoed the señora in a voice and with a look that startled her companion. "But no matter. If he escape punishment in this world, which I doubt, I doubt not he shall have a fearful retribution in the time to come."

"Indeed, I can not help but think thou hast taken a great prejudice against him," observed de Berrio, "I have found him well to be depended on, and do trust him most implicitly. Even now he hath gone on an adventure for me that hath great risk in it, for 'tis no other than the endeavoring to entrap that notorious English pirate Sir Walter Raleigh and his villanous followers, so that I may give them a complete overthrow."

"Sir Walter Raleigh, said you?" inquired the señora, seemingly as if she marvelled much at hearing of his name mentioned,

"The same, doña," replied the governor. "He is now upon the coast with divers of his ships, intending to venture himself and the pitiful fools he hath induced to follow him, into the interior of Guiana, hoping for the discovery of El Dorado; but if I spoil not his voyage, then am I wonderfully mistaken."

"Are you sure 'tis Walter Raleigh?"

asked his fair companion, seemingly in a monstrous agitation.

"Sure!" cried Don Antonio, in some surprise. "What doubt can there be of it? Did not Padre Bartolomé bring me certain intelligence of every one thing connected with the expedition. I faith, so minute is my information, that I have with me a paper containing the names of every officer engaged upon it, and the exact number of the men and ships;" and he produced a paper from his vest.

"Let me see it," said the señora, and she instantly snatched the paper from his hand, and began a reading of it. She had not put her attention to it many minutes, which she did holding the paper trembling in her hand, when her gaze stopped a moment, and then quietly folding up the list, she returned it to the governor. "I thank you. But are you sure this is to be relied on?"

"I will be bound for't, 'tis accurate to a letter," replied Don Antonio.

"Doubtless, you mean to take them prisoners if you can?" inquired his fair companion, seemingly as if perfectly unconcerned.

"By the Virgin! I mean to hang up every rascal of them as soon as ever I can get them in my power," answered De Berrio. "I will make such an example of this Sir Walter Raleigh and his piratical associates, that no more such shall ever dare venture on the coast. But away with all thought of such poor knaves!" continued he, as he placed his arm round her waist. "This delicious evening surely was never made to be wasted in idle talk concerning of such sorry rascals; let us give the moments to love. Turn me those lustrous eyes this way, doña, and smile on me thy delicatest smiles."

"Smile! I have lost all humor for smiling," replied the señora.

"Then find the humor again, I prythee, for 'tis a humor that becometh thee infinitely." At the hearing of this his fair companion, mayhap intent upon some object, did smile most bewitchingly; peradventure, it may have been at the flattery she had just heard, for it be difficult to find any woman, upon so pretty a compliment entirely indifferent; but let it be as it may, that she smiled there can be no manner of doubt, even though the cause of her smiling there shall be no certainty of.

"O' my life, thou art the very sweetest piece of womanhood eye of mine ever dwelt on," exclaimed the governor, gazing upon her with most enamored glances.

"Thou dost but flatter me, Don Antonio," replied the lady; yet, as if with a manner that showed she was not ill pleased with what she had heard.

"Nay, by our Lady, 'tis the truest thing that ever was spoke," added Don Antonio, with more fervor, as he did press her very lovingly in his arms. "None of our Spanish women are to be compared with thee. Thou hast a shape which would dissolve the icy heart of an anchorite; and looks hast thou which heart of man never could stand against. By all the saints, Querida! I can not look upon those pouting lips of thine without mine own being drawn thereto with a power I can not resist for the soul of me."

The governor was about attempting to caress his fair companion when the noise of a door opening behind him was heard, and there was presently seen entering Padre Bartolomé, looking as if exceeding travel-worn. As soon as he caught sight of the two in the position in which they stood, of a sudden his handsome features did put on a scowl of very great malignity, and he stopped where he was. The señora was the first to observe him, which, when she did, she broke from the arms of Don Antonio, and with a look of extreme disgust and abhorrence, proudly swept by the Jesuit, and vanished out of the room. De Berrio upon this turned round, and then noticed the padre advancing toward him, now with a countenance of profound humility.

"Welcome, Padre Bartolomé!" exclaimed the governor, with wonderful cheerfulness; "welcome back to San Josef de Oruño. But say, how hast thou speed on thine errand? Are those woodcocks snared? Shall we have a famous revenge on these villanous Englishmen?"

"I grieve to say, my son, that the Virgin hath not smiled on my efforts," answered the ecclesiastic.

"What, have they escaped?" loudly inquired Don Antonio, and thereupon his face became mightily clouded.

"I did seek to cast them away on the coast, as I sent thee word," continued the padre. "Meaning to manage it so that it should seem but the result of an accident; yet the soldier Tobias, who was recommended to me as one of so daring a nature that he would do the boldest thing for love of God and the Virgin, did manage so ill, that, when nigh upon the very completing of our purpose, he must needs

pick a quarrel with one of those accursed heretics, and so bring on a brawl; which so incensed Sir Walter Raleigh against him, that he would have none of him for a pilot, and straightway turned the ship about, and made back for the place whence he came."

"A thousand curses on that villain's head for marring so goodly a plot!" exclaimed De Berrio, furiously. "He deserveth to be flayed alive, at least. I will see that he have fitting punishment. But thinkest thou those piratical rascals have taken the alarm?"

"I can not say for certain, my son," replied the priest. "It did seem to me more than once that Sir Walter had suspicion of me; but I could not be assured of it. He did behave very courteously, and talked much of the felicity he should enjoy, could he but assure himself of possessing thy company for a brief space."

"Madre de Dios! he shall have it longer than he looks for," cried Don Antonio, with a very savage expression of countenance. "He shall have right famous enjoyment of it. I will give him such felicity as he hath met nothing like in this world, or may expect in the loathsomest place in purgatory, where I will send him."

"Thou hadst best, then, be quick, my son," observed the padre, "else shall he slip through our fingers, and then shall the church suffer a great loss; for 'tis a most commendable thing to cut off these heretics root and branch—they be so inveterate against our holy religion. Lose no time, I prythee. Their force is already far from contemptible, and if they are joined by the other ships, it will be the difficultest thing possible to do them any damage, unless thou hast those supplies from Spain which will be sent thee on purpose to spoil their adventure."

"I would they had arrived!" exclaimed the governor, "then should I be at no loss what to do: but, doubtless, such soldiers as I can have, are now on their march, and will reach here in a few days. Then, methinks, 'twill be an easy matter to inveigle this Sir Walter Raleigh and his companions into the island, where they shall fall into an ambuscade, in the which they shall be so handled as shall make the survivors glad to surrender at discretion."

"Dost think 'twill be so late as two or three days, my son, before thou canst have the soldiers?" inquired Padre Bartolomé.

"It can not be less," replied Don Antonio.

"Methinks such a delay is exceeding dangerous," observed the Jesuit.

"What makes thee think so, padre?" asked De Berrio.

"The commander of these heretics was wonderfully inquisitive concerning of what force thou possesseth," answered the priest with much seriousness. "He asked many questions, whereof, as might be presumed of me, I gave him such answers as he could profit little from: but, supposing that he should get speech of the natives, the which, though I have endeavored to prevent, is like enough to happen; perchance he may procure such information as may lead him into the making of a sudden attack upon thee."

"Ha! dost think so?" exclaimed Don Antonio, listening attentively, and with some uneasiness.

"I had the ill hap to sprain my ankle, as I journeyed this way, else should I have been here sooner," continued the padre. "But it oft struck me in my progress, 'twould be an easy thing for them to master the guard at Puerto de los Españoles, and proceeding quickly thence to this place, come upon thee unawares."

"Carba de San Pedro, 'tis like enough!" cried the governor, now in some alarm.

"How are thy forces disposed? Hast a strong guard set? Hast thou such strength at hand as could beat off these cursed heretics?" inquired the ecclesiastic, with increasing earnestness.

"Nay, o' my life, I have scarce a hundred men," replied De Berrio, whilst fear and anxiousness did more and more take possession of his haughty countenance. "But how wears the night, padre? With the blessing of the virgin, there shall yet be time to prepare for these wretched villains, supposing they would dare to venture against me—which I doubt hugely."

"Doubt nothing of the kind, my son," said the padre quickly, "I know them well. There is nothing so like to happen as their surprising of thee. 'Tis now nigh unto midnight. 'Twould be best to rouse thy soldiers without a moment's delaying, and so dispose of them as to keep them from much loss, whilst they do what damage they can to these Englishmen should they make an attack."

"I will about it on the instant," answered Don Antonio, as he hastily made for the door. "But come thou with me, I would have speech with thee on the

way." The two then went forth together, but scarce had they got into the street when they were aware of a sudden firing of pieces, a clashing of swords, and a din of voices, that in the still night sounded with marvellous distinctness.

"By Heaven, they are upon us!" exclaimed the governor, drawing his sword and hastening to whence the sounds proceeded.

"Thou art going wrong, my son—the firing is from this way!" cried the padre, holding the other by the arm.

"Nay, 'tis this way, I am assured of it," said his companion more urgently, as he strove to proceed in the direction he was a going.

"Hark! hearest thou not the firing now?" cried the priest, still detaining him.

"Madre de Dios, they have us on both sides!" exclaimed Don Antonio with great emphasis, and he appeared quite bewildered. At this time there came running past him sundry of the inhabitants half-dressed, as if they had just fled from their beds, a screaming and crying out wonderfully; and seeing of the governor, some who knew him did implore his assistance with very piteous accents —and yet none knew of what they were afraid. Some said it was one thing and some another, and many got round De Berrio, every one telling of him a different story. During this the firing and the hurraing increased, and came so nigh that Don Antonio was shortly left alone; and upon his looking round for the padre, he was nowhere visible. Presently he observed a company of soldiers retreating in haste and disorder, and running in amongst them, he called on them to stop; but they would not hearken to him, and continued their flight, with him in the midst of them.

"By Gog and Magog, here be more of 'em to kill!" cried out Harry Daring, at the head of a party of his countrymen that now made their appearance.

"Down with the villain Spaniards!" shouted Simon Mainsail.

"A Raleigh! a Raleigh!" exclaimed some score of voices, and a discharge of firearms, followed by a rush sword in hand upon the affrighted soldiers of Don Antonio de Berrio, soon convinced the latter that they had fled from one set of enemies only to meet with others of a like desperate character. They made but little opposition; most of them threw down their arms and begged for mercy. A few of a braver sort fought round their commander, but they were soon cut down by the followers of Sir Walter Raleigh, among whom Harry Daring distinguished himself in a manner that did greatly surprise both friends and foes.

"Yield thee my prisoner or die!" exclaimed Harry, after having knocked the governor's rapier out of his hand, he put the point of his own to his breast. Don Antonio looked as if he liked not to be mastered by so young an antagonist, but seeing there was no help, he said in Spanish that he yielded.

"Nay, if thou canst not speak honest English, thou must needs be a rogue and a villain, so I had best rid the world of thee," said the other, and seemed about to fulfil his intention.

"Hullo, Harry, hurt him not: he is an officer of rank!" exclaimed Master Francis, as he hastened toward him, seeing what his friend was a doing of, then addressing the governor in Spanish, added very courteously—"I pray you yield yourself prisoner, señor, and say of what quality you are. I will answer you shall have fair treatment."

"I have already yielded," replied the Spaniard proudly, "and am Don Antonio de Berrio, the governor of Guiana."

At this moment who should come up but Sir Walter Raleigh, at the head of a portion of his force, and he heard what was going on—"And I am Sir Walter Raleigh," said he, addressing the governor in his own language. "The fortune of war hath made thee my prisoner, Señor Gobernador. I am well aware that had I had the ill-hap to have fallen into thy hands, in consequence of the designs which I am confident thou didst entertain against me, I should have fared but ill: but I follow no bad example. I forgive thee thy malicious intentions, because thou art in my power, and will have thee treated as I should have wished to have been used had I been in thine." Don Antonio bowed, haughtily, but he said never a word. Sir Walter then gave certain commands to his officers for the securing of the prisoners, and the resting of the men after their fatigues; and then proceeded, accompanied by Master Francis, Harry Daring, and a sufficient guard, to take possession of the governor's house.

It was about an hour after what hath already been related, that Master Francis had laid himself down on the couch in the chamber described at the commencement of this chapter, whilst Harry Daring was laying of his length upon some

rushes at his feet. Neither had taken off any of their clothes, designing only to get what sleep they could for a few hours, the which they greatly needed, having had a toilsome march before they came to the city. The lights had been put out, but the moon shining through the windows with great splendor, did sufficiently enable any one to distinguish objects.

"Well, this be exquisite fine fun of a sure thing!" exclaimed Harry Daring cheerfully. "There be nothing like the killing of Spaniards. Indeed it be the very properest way of breathing of a vein after all. O' my word, if old Lather had seen me shooting of one villain here, and cutting down another villain there, the whilst so many of our enemies were running this way and that, some shouting, some crying, and some a fighting as well as they might, and the more peaceable sort of men, women, and children, striving to escape from their houses in so monstrous a fright, that they could scarce put on themselves a morsel of covering, would he not have marvelled wonderfully, Master Francis?"

"I dare say he might," replied his companion.

"By Gog and Magog! methinks he would not know what to say upon it," added the boy. "But hang all barbering! say I; and as for physic, let them that like it take it. I'll meddle no more with such things, I promise you. How I should have liked big Jack o' the Turnstile to have been amongst us. He would have seen how bravely thou didst bear thyself in the thick of the fray, and would not have dared ever after to call thee 'mollycoddle.' I'faith! I do believe that scurvy rogue of a Spaniard, when we were forcing of our way through the city-gates, would have pinned me against the wall—a murrain on him!—hadst thou not so timely cut in and given the fellow his deserts. Dost not think 'twas a great pity the fighting was so soon over?"

"The sooner such things are over 'tis the better for both the conquered and the conquerors," observed Master Francis.

"Dost think so indeed!" said Harry Daring in some surprise. "O' my life! I can not see it in that light. For mine own part, I would not care to meet with an enemy who would soon give in. There seemeth to be no credit in fighting with such. I be for those who will not allow of their being beat till they can not help themselves. Many a bout of quarter-staff have I had with fellows who gave me no lack of sore thumps, and had I then said I had had enough of it, they should have boasted ever after that I was one of a poor spirit; but I held out at all times, and thumped the more for the thumping I got, the which they could never stand so well as could I; and the end of it was that I prevailed over them, and made them acknowledge they had got such a drubbing as till then they had no experience of. Dost not think quarter-staff an exceeding pleasant pastime?"

"I never had liking for it," replied his companion.

"True!" exclaimed the other. "I did forget how delicate thou wert. 'Twould never have done for thee to have practised at so rough an amusement, for thou couldst not have helped getting thy head broke in a presently, and mayhap some of thy limbs into the bargain. Indeed, there was but slight occasion for thy liking such rude sports; for, as I have ever said, thou wert a gentleman born."

"Prythee, talk not, good Harry!" said Master Francis in a marvellous tremulous voice, which showed that what he had just heard moved him exceedingly. "I am much fatigued, and need rest."

"Nay, then, I am a villain if I disturb thee!" cried Harry, perfectly unconscious that he said aught hurtful to the feelings of his friend. "Good night, Master Francis!"

"Good night, Harry," replied his companion, and for the space of a minute or so there was a strict silence; but after that the courageous boy seemed not to lay at all comfortable, for he turned himself about many times.

"What aileth thee, Harry?" asked Master Francis very kindly.

"The pestilent moon must needs shine upon my face, and be hanged to it!" exclaimed Harry Daring. "Do what I will I can not keep my eyelids closed."

"Come and sleep with me on this couch—there is plenty of room," said his friend.

"That will I never do," replied the other. "I have read in books it be not customary the esquire should sleep with the knight, nor have I heard of such a thing. It be the properest place for me to lie at your feet; and, like a faithful esquire, here will I take my rest."

"Let it be as is most pleasing to thee, good Harry," said Master Francis; "but I would not have thee deprived of sleep for such notions."

"Oh! I care not for sleep a fig's end," cried Harry Daring, "and would as lief keep awake as asleep. O' my life I think there be nothing so pleasant as having a famous talk with a friend just before one drops off like. Did I ever tell thee of the exquisite fine fun I had with old Barnaby Braddle, the constable of the watch? Nay, I be certain thou hast not heard a word of it. Well, it must be known to thee, that Barnaby could scarce see beyond the end of his nose: which, by-the-by had no end at all, for it was nigh as round as a ball, and of a very fiery redness; besides which he was so deaf, he could hear but faintly. For all that, was he made constable of the watch, and was ever in a monstrous tyrannical humor if he caught any of us apprentices playing of such innocent tricks as breaking windows, rousing up the citizens by calling fire, and the like; therefore did I determine to have some sport with him. So I and big Jack o' the Turnstile, long-legged Tom the tailor's son round the corner, Peter Perriwinkle, our neighbor the chandler's apprentice, and one or two others, did station ourselves in such places as we knew were the properest for our plan; and presently we saw him, with his lanthern in one hand, and his bill in the other, peering about him with as much earnestness as if he could see but a glimpse of anything, though it might be within a yard of him; and grumbling the whilst as if he must needs hear his own voice to keep up his courage.

"As he passed, one cried out, close at his elbow, 'Watch! watch! I be set upon by thieves.'—'Stand, ye dishonest caitiffs!' straightway would he cry; but he ventured only a step or two in the direction he fancied the sound proceeded from, and then stopped, expecting the thieves would run away at the hearing of his voice. 'Help! Master Constable, help! here be a cutpurse upon me!' shouted another from behind him; and he presently turned himself round, saying quickly, 'I charge ye hold him fast till I come;' and went a step or two that way. 'Here, honest Barnaby, help a poor woman who is nigh being undone by villains!' screamed a third, a little on the opposite side of him. 'Murrain on ye! why don't ye say in what direction ye be to be found?' grumbled out Master Constable, turning himself very leisurely about. 'Watch! watch! I pray you come, or I shall be killed,' cried a fourth very piteously, from another place. 'Be killed and be hanged to ye!' bawled the old fellow, now in a horrible bad humor; 'canst not keep in one place? If the villains but stay till I come up to them, I promise to show them no mercy, so they had best look to it, and take themselves off;' and then he ventured a few steps in that way; but he had scarce done so, when another cried out something else from an opposite quarter, at the which he began to swear most lustily; but immediately he stepped in any direction, there was a voice calling of him, from one totally different.

"At last, when he appeared so bewildered, after poking of his lanthern here, and then turning of it round there, and looking into this place, and then into that, with marvellous little profit and wonderful vexation, we all got round him and commenced a calling of him, every one at the same time; and this he could in no manner stand; for after listening a bit, in the most perfect fear and trembling ever beheld, he dashed through the circle, bawling out that he was set upon by devils, and stopped not a moment till he found himself among a whole company of his brethren of the watch, who had been drawn to him by his cries. Now I think he was rightly served of us. Dost not think so, Master Francis?"

Harry Daring waited a brief space, but received no answer.

"Dost not think he was rightly served of us, Master Francis?" he again inquired, but got no more answer than at first. "O' my life he hath gone to sleep," added Harry, as if in some surprise. "Well, I doubt not he be exceeding tired; therefore 'tis the best thing he can do, poor fellow. Methinks I have done but an ill thing in having talked to him so much. By Gog and Magog, this be the most pestilent moon I ever saw; for it will shine on my face in spite of me." Thereupon he turned himself upon his stomach, and resting of his forehead on his arms, in a few minutes it was evident, from his regular and deep breathing, he was as sound asleep as was his companion.

This had scarce concluded when the door opened, and the figure of Padre Bartolomé glided softly into the room, hiding of his face in his garment. Cautiously stepping over Harry Daring, he approached the couch on which Master Francis was lying. For a minute or two he gazed upon the sleeping secretary with a countenance more of a demon than that of a human being. Every trace of comeliness had vanished from his handsome features, and his eyes, that had been seen to

beam with piety and benevolence not long since, now flashed glances of the deadliest hate and malice. Master Francis lay upon his back, with his left hand under his head, and his right upon the handle of his rapier. His shoulders sunk into the soft pillows that he rested his arm on, and his legs were crossed one over another. Scarce any face could be met with more mild and affectionate in its expression than was his. 'Twas almost doubtful he was asleep he breathed so softly, yet was he dreaming a most pleasant dream of the happiness of bygone days, when Joanna appeared to him all he thought most worthy to be worshipped. Alack! that such visions of woman's perfectness should ever be so unsubstantial!

The Jesuit slowly drew from his vest a dagger. He knelt down on one knee to bring himself more upon a level with the sleeper. The weapon was raised above the breast of Master Francis. In the next moment it was wrenched out of the padre's hand. He looked up in some alarm, and beheld, standing over him, the beautiful form of the lady described at the commencement of this chapter. Surely never woman looked with such terrible glances as did she on Padre Bartolomé.

"Begone!" whispered she to him in his own language, holding the dagger over him with her right hand, whilst with her left she pointed to the door. "Stay but another instant in this place and I will cleave thy treacherous heart in twain." The ecclesiastic seemed quite cowed. Her gaze appeared to burn with pride and disdain. Her whole form looked as though it were dilating with a power something beyond the human. The Jesuit slowly rose. He felt as if he did not dare speak. His looked quailed before those scorching glances; and with cautious steps he left the room, her eyes fixed upon him as he went, and she continuing in the same attitude, and with the same fearful expression of countenance as when she first spoke to him. When he had departed out of the door she turned her eyes upon the form of Master Francis like one that is almost afraid to look. All of a sudden the expression of her features changed to the most devoted affection. She came closer. She stooped down over him with a gaze of the very sincerest love, and there stayed gazing for a minute or two. Presently she stooped lower, and looked as though she were about to touch his lips with her own; but on a sudden she drew herself back quickly—a strong shudder passed over her limbs, and a look of terrible anguish took possession of her countenance. She seemed as if she could not glance that way again; and in a few seconds quietly followed the Jesuit.

CHAPTER XXIV.

For what man lives or breathes on England's stage,
That knew not brave SOUTHAMPTON, in whose sight
Most placed their day, and in his absence night?
SIR JOHN BEAUMONT.

Thou glorious Laurell of the Muses' hill;
Whose eye doth crowne the most victorious pen;
Bright Lampe of Virtue, in whose sacred skill
Lives all the blisse of eares-inchanting men
JARVIS MARKHAM.

I ought to be no stranger to thy worth,
Nor let thy virtues in oblivion sleep
WITHER.

Thy love is better than high birth to me;
Richer than wealth, prouder than garments cost;
Of more delight than hawks or horses be,
And having thee of all men's pride I boast
SHAKSPEARE.

"I THANK you right heartily for the cheerfulness with which you have offered me your friendly assistance in this business," observed the youthful earl of Southampton, as he sat close upon Master Shakspeare in his lodgings at the Bankside. "Believe me, of all mine acquaintance there is none I could so readily trust as yourself in a matter of so delicate a kind."

"Be assured I will in no way discredit your favorable opinion," replied his companion very sincerely. "Indeed, I am delighted that it lieth within the compass of my poor ability to do a service to one whose friendliness to me hath been made manifest on so many occasions; to say naught of your lordship's singular admirable qualities, which make the service doubly honorable."

"Ah, Master Shakspeare!" exclaimed the young nobleman, seemingly in a more serious humor. "Of what avail is the good report of one's associates when that happiness which should be the reward of desert is denied me?"

"Nay, my good lord, not altogether denied," said the other. "Fortune doth not smile on your love at this moment as she should had I the controlling of her, nor doth her opposition look so formidable as to afford no hope of overcoming it. Hath not the lovely Mistress Varnon already favored you with excellent proof of her esteem?"

"Truly she hath," replied his friend, brightening up somewhat. "That I possess her young heart's best affections, methinks there can be no manner of doubt. She hath given me most sweet evidenc of it a thousand times."

"And is she not bountifully graced by nature with all loveable qualities?" inquired Master Shakspeare.

"Indeed is she!" answered my Lord Southampton with increasing animation. "Her beauty is of a very choice kind. Her disposition gentle and full of great kindness, and her modesty that of one who, innocent herself, believeth in the innocency of all around her."

"And enriched with the love of a creature so rarely gifted, you can assert that happiness hath been denied you!" exclaimed the former in some sort of surprise. "Fie on you, my lord! I can not help thinking that in this matter you show yourself discontented upon exceeding little occasion."

"But her kinswoman, Dame Deborah, hath forbid me the house," replied his youthful patron. "She is fearful of the queen's anger; for her majesty, having heard of my attachment, hath stated she will not allow of my marriage with Mistress Varnon, on the ground that she is no fit match for me; and expecting the same harsh results that followed the union of Raleigh with Mistress Throckmorton, the old gentlewoman is using measures to put an end to our intimacy. 'Slife, Master Shakspeare!" continued the young nobleman, evidently much moved. "Call you not this most tyrannical usage? Here is an exquisite sweet lady, who, because she is noted for a lack of the world's gear, is to be deprived of a loving husband; and I, who desire to be claimed by her by so fond a title, am to be denied the possession of an estimable and affectionate partner, who hath in her nature a treasury of all sterling commodities, because she only wanteth that of which I stand in no need. She is of good family, being of near kin to my Lord of Essex. Her behavior is of the best, she having been brought up in all courtly accomplishments; and for her disposition, it is not possible to meet with one more worthily disposed: and yet the queen declareth her to be no fit match for me! I'faith! fit match or not, I will have her, holds she the same mind she was."

"Now I do perceive in you something of the true lover," observed his companion with a smile; "which I could not but have my doubts of before, seeing that the trifling obstacles you spoke of seemed sufficient to put you out of heart. Be assured that he who loveth sincerely, loveth only the more, the greater shall be the difficulties that oppose his affection; for love is that sort of seed which once planted in the soil will live on through the sharpest winter—nay, though hillocks of snow be piled upon it, and all manner of fierce storms assail the very spot it doth inhabit—there shall it dwell unharmed; and in its proper season of sunshine—lo!—you see it a perfect plant, rejoicing in such exquisite beauty as ravisheth the heart that can appreciate its divine perfections."

"Excellently said, sweet Master Shakspeare!" exclaimed my Lord Southampton, in evident admiration. "'Tis indeed of the very sort you have so eloquently expressed; and that such love is mine you may rest assured. But the obstacles I am now threatened with can not be of the small account you hold them in. Remember I can get no speech of her though I have strove earnestly for such happiness for some days past. I can not even get sight of her, for the old dame keepeth her under strict lock and key in an out-of-the-way old house at Islington, and will let her be seen of none save such as be in her confidence. My letters have been returned; my messages receive no attention; I have attempted to bribe the servants without avail; and all my schemes to gain admittance to her dear presence have come to the like unprofitable conclusion. In sober truth, I am nigh driven to my wit's end; and if that you can not assist me, I know not what next to be about."

"Despair not, my good lord," replied Master Shakspeare. "Unpromising as things may be, I doubt not to make them put on a more pleasing aspect in no very long time."

"Say you so, indeed?" cried the young nobleman, his handsome features glowing with pleasure. "Let it be soon then, I pray you. Truly, if you accomplish such an excellent purpose, I shall esteem you the truest friend man ever had."

"I will do it, or else my wit shall be hugely at fault," replied Master Shakspeare. "But you must promise to be entirely guided by me in this matter, else can I succeed in nothing."

"All that you please to desire of me I will willingly perform, depend on't," said the other.

"Then come you this way, my good

lord," cried his companion rising from his seat and approaching what looked to be the door of a closet. "And if I fail in procuring you speech with your fair mistress before the day is over, proclaim at Paul's that Will Shakspeare is no match for an old woman."

"Sweet Master Shakspeare, I am at your bidding," answered the Lord Southampton very cheerfully, and thereupon they both proceeded into an adjoining chamber. There we must leave them for awhile.

In a room of moderate dimensions fairly hung with arras that looked to be of an ancient manufac ure—for, out of all doubt, the colors were wofully dim; and in fact, the whole of the furniture had much the same appearance of wornout splendor—there were two ladies. One, from her evident antiquity and the faded costliness of her attire, seemed of a piece with the furnishing of the chamber. She could not have been many years short of sixty; her features were sharp, and at that time wore a marvellous cold and stern expression. Her false locks had been dyed of a sandy hue (doubtless in compliment to Queen Elizabeth, whose natural hair was of that color) and dressed in the fashion of the time valiant, with no lack of feathers and jewels. Her ruff was laced and plaited with wonderful art, coming from the back of her neck very broad, and extending on each side of her face till the ends rested on her bosom, having two wings of lawn stiffened with wire, and starched of a yellow dye. The stomacher was exceeding long, straight, and broad, and in the fore part of the waist there was a pocket for such things as were needed to be put in it. The gown was of velvet embroidered with bugles, with the sleeves curiously cut; and the farthingale was monstrously bulky. Silk stockings, with shoes having famous high heels, and long gloves trimmed with silk, completed her costume; and there she stood as stately and stiff as the figure of Queen Sheba done in waxwork, occasionally fanning of herself with a large ivory fan, or putting to her sharp nose an embroidered pocket-handkerchief richly wrought and delicately scented.

To this the other lady was as exquisite a constrast as could possibly be met with. She was young. I doubt much she had seen more than sixteen or seventeen summers. Her stature was not above the ordinary, yet was her figure so graceful it looked as though to add would only be to spoil; and her complexion was of that choice kind where the red comes peeping through the pure skin, as a flower out of the snow, that gives to comeliness of feature its rarest garnishing. There was in her countenance so admirable an expression of youth and innocence, that it must have charmed the most suspicious nature. In contrast to her companion's antiquated finery, she wore a simple gown made close to the body, with an apron of fine linen; and her hair without ornament save its being curiously knotted and raised from the forehead. She stood with her eyes modestly fixed upon the ground; whilst the other regarded her with a stern and searching look.

"I marvel at thy exceeding shamelessness, Mistress Varnon!" exclaimed the old gentlewoman in a tone of monstrous indignation. "Never, in all my days, saw I such thorough baseness of behavior. Prythee, dost think I can tolerate these unmaidenly doings? Dost fancy I will allow of our family being disgraced, and our name brought into disrepute—a name that hath hitherto been of such exceeding worship, that it might stand second to none in these kingdoms? I take pride in saying the honorableness of the Varnons hath never been questioned—the sons have been heroes of valor, the daughters models of discretion; but woe is me! our house is like to be utterly put out of its notable reputation by the pernaciousness of its last and only unworthy scion."

"But, dear aunt!" exclaimed her young kinswoman imploringly.

"Speak not to me, Mistress Varnon," replied the other with a dignified wave of her arm, and the same formal, proud, and stern demeanor. "Respect for myself and the unsullied name I bear, maketh me desirous of disclaiming all relationship with one who hath exhibited such abominable disobedience. I know not the language which should express my absolute abhorrence of thy crime. 'Tis something so marvellous in a member of our family that the commission of it hath moved me to so excessive an indignation, that I find it clean impossible to express the sense I hold it in. How horrified my sainted grandmother, the abbess of St. Ursula must be could she behold thy delinquency! How shocked would my great uncle the bishop become! With what consternation would it be regarded by my illustrious kinsman the lord-chamberlain! And how infamous would it appear in the eyes of my respected aunt the maid of honor! I am

thankful they have been spared this infliction. They are to be envied upon whom the grave hath shut out from their view so humiliating a scene."

"But my lord loveth me honorably, Aunt Deborah," murmured the abashed maiden.

"Love thee, Mistress Varnon!" cried the old gentlewoman, in some sort of astonishment. "And what, thinkest thou, is his love compared with thy loyalty? Hath not her gracious majesty forbid the marriage, and thinkest thou that a princess of such immeasurable knowledge, immaculate virtue, and unbounded beneficence, knoweth not what is proper for thee? Wouldst have the audacity to dispute the commands of thy lawful sovereign? My hair standeth on end at so traitorous a supposition. Queen Elizabeth, out of her abundant grace of disposition, hath ever held our family in proper estimation, which she showeth in a very laudable measure, in the favor with which she hath, for some time, regarded my kinsman the Earl of Essex; and shall a daughter of the house she hath so honored, ungratefully disobey her royal commands? Is it to be believed, that of a race approved for their loyalty, there should now come a rebel? If I had not known it as a truth, I would have doubted such wretched villany could have existed amongst us."

"Indeed, dear aunt, I can not help loving my Lord Southampton," observed her youthful companion, in a low sweet voice, "he hath so noble, so admirable a disposition."

"Disposition, quotha!" exclaimed the other with increased indignation. "Darest thou talk of his disposition when thy duty is concerned? Had he twenty dispositions, thou shouldst think no more of him when such be the will of thy sovereign. It is, on the face of it, that thou art obstinate to a degree that exceedeth all example. But thy ill-doing confineth not itself to obstinacy. Ill-hap is mine to find that a daughter of the house of Varnon hath not only so forgot her natural obedience, as to set herself in opposition to her lawful sovereign, but hath shown such little regard for the dignity of her family, as to attempt to bribe a serving-man to assist her in carrying on a clandestine correspondence. Yes," continued Aunt Deborah as she slowly drew a letter from her pocket, evidently to the infinite consternation of her pretty niece. "I have discovered all thy exceeding baseness. Thou hast done a deed enough to draw thy ancestors out of their tombs, in horror of its very villany. But I will read what horrible treason thou hast here set down, though I doubt not t'will move me to be marvellously ashamed of thy disgraceful conduct." And thereupon, slowly, and with an air of stern dignity, she first put on her spectacles, then broke open and commenced reading the letter, whilst the eyes of the fair culprit were fixed on the floor more intently than ever, with so sweet an expression of innocency, that it seemed impossible for any person to gaze on her face, and feel harshly toward her.

"'To my ever-honored and most dear Lord Henry Wriothesly, Earl of Southampton.'

"Alack, what an atrocious superscription is here!" exclaimed the old gentlewoman. "'Most dear lord!' Hadst thou been married to him a good ten years, thou couldst not have addressed him more like a wife. But I will proceed.

"'I am sorely grieved, sweetheart, that I am debarred the exquisite delight of seeing thee.'

"Did ever any one read such downright rebellion? Sorely grieved because her majesty hath been graciously pleased to command that my Lord Southampton have naught to do with thee! I am all amazed. 'And thinking thou art in a like unhappy case—in hope of affording thee the sweet comfort I so much stand in need of—I write to assure thee I do love thee so infinitely, naught on this earth shall make it less.' Well! never met I such wanton immodesty! Why, what sense of shame canst thou have to tell a man such horrid things? But where left I off? Ah!—'make it less.' 'And all I now pray for is that thou wilt give me such covetable place in thy remembrance as, of a surety, dear lord of my life, thou hast in mine, till the happy time come round again when I may see thee, and hear thee, and bless thee, with such true affectionateness as would I at this present were thy dear presence allowed me.'

"And hast thou really the impiety to pray for such wicked things?" inquired Aunt Deborah with a look of stately astonishment, as she deliberately put away the letter and her spectacles, and then began to fan herself with a slow and dignified motion. "Well may religious men cry out against the iniquity of the age. Indeed, the world must have come to a sad pass when in one so young there existeth so much disloyalty, obstinacy, immodesty, and impiety. But to prevent

further dishonor to our name, I shall see that the commands of her most gracious majesty are properly obeyed."

"Dear aunt!" murmured the offender, as if almost afraid to speak.

"Go to thy virginals, Mistress Varnon," replied her kinswoman in a lofty manner. "Practise the last new madrigal I procured thee of the ingenious Master Morley. I will hold thee well to thy studies, so that thou shalt have no chance of practising the evil the infamousness of thy nature would set thee upon."

The abashed maiden, probably glad to escape from the lecture, moved toward a corner of the room where the instrument was placed, and her aunt Deborah, with slow and stately steps, proceeded to a chair close upon it, where, after a solemn arrangement of her drapery, with a calm and dignified countenance she sat herself down. Presently Mistress Varnon commenced singing the first part of a madrigal, which she did with a very delicate voice, accompanying of herself on the virginals, whilst her kinswoman sat by listening with a most delectable gravity impressed upon her ancient features, a beating of the time with her fan. At this time an old serving-man, in a faded showy livery, entered, and advanced with an air of respectful awe a little way into the chamber. The music ceased, as did also the beating of the time.

"Well, Joseph?" exclaimed Dame Deborah, sitting upright in her chair very formal and stiff.

"An' it please you, my lady," replied the man, "there is one waiting below who calleth himself Master Dulcimer, a teacher of music, as he says, who desireth to have speech with you, saying that he hath come at the express desire of my Lord Essex."

"What sort of man seemeth he?" inquired his mistress.

"A very worshipful sort of man, an' it please you, my lady," replied Joseph, "one of wonderful fine accommodation in his apparelling."

"Let him have entrance," said Aunt Deborah in her stateliest manner; and at this command the old serving-man, keeping his face very respectfully toward his mistress, retreated out at the door. Directly he had disappeared the old dame began fidgeting about her dress, pulling out this part and smoothing that, and looking to see that nothing was out of order; and before she had well done this the door again opened, and thereat entered a stranger. He was a man of a very commendable stature and features, yet carried he himself so stiffly, and looked with such a primness as was singular to see. In age he must have been no youngster, for his face seemed wrinkled somewhat. In dress he was attired as a gallant of the old fashion, wearing a beard of an orange tawny color, trimmed spade-wise, with jewels in his ears, and a love-lock with a silken rose at the end hanging down nigh upon the shoulder. The ruff was very large, well stiffened and bushy; and the doublet of fine cloth, having a capacious cape and Danish sleeves, was apparently so hard quilted that the wearer stood in it like unto a man in armor. The gallygaskins were bolstered up all round the lower part of the body to a preposterous size with a stuffing, doubtless of wool and hair; the hose were of woven silk with broad garters; and his feet were eased in pantofles of such high heels as bore him up some two or three inches more than his natural stature, and these were ornamented with shoe-roses that looked to be of some five pound a piece. He wore a dagger at his back, and a rapier, the scabbard whereof was very prettily ornamented, at his side. His hat was of a high tapering crown, daintily embroidered all over, and having a goodly plume of feathers drooping from it; and his gloves, as was soon made manifest, were perfumed very sweetly.

As soon as Dame Deborah observed the entrance of her visiter, she rose from her seat slowly and with a monstrous dignity; seeing which Master Dulcimer stopped, with his hat in his hand, and with a very famous courtesy bowed as low as the quilting of his doublet would allow him; thereupon the old gentlewoman courtesied to the ground with exceeding deliberation; after which he advanced in a respectful manner some few paces and bowed to her with the like profound courteousness, and then she again courtesied to him with the same stateliness of behavior. All this time each of them regarded the other with a visage of as perfect a gravity as was ever carried by one at a funeral, taking no manner of notice of Mistress Varnon, who, having risen at the entrance of the stranger, stood nigh unto her seat, marvelling in no small measure at the ridiculousness of the scene that was being acted before her.

"I have ventured to intrude myself into your desirable presence, most honorable lady," said Master Dulcimer at last, addressing Aunt Deborah in a voice of

infinite affectation, "having been moved thereto by the report of my worshipful friend and patron the Lord Essex, who for a right exquisite taste in the truly delectable science of music hath not his fellow anywhere. Peradventure it may be known unto your honorable ladyship that I have some poor ability in the writing of madrigals, and in divers other kinds of tuneful compositions, having, besides great study in the art pursued in these realms for a long course of time, travelled into Italy and in France, learning as I went of the choicest masters those countries afforded, from the which I have but lately returned. It hath been my extreme honor to be in admirable good favor with many persons of worship, but hearing of my Lord Essex that your excellent ladyship hath such fine judgment in madrigals as is marvellous to your friends and the world, I hasted here on the instant, desirous of all things that what my poor wit hath fashioned should be found worthy of a hearing by one of such notable delicate taste in these matters."

"I pray you be seated, Master Dulcimer," replied Aunt Deborah with exceeding graciousness, after listening in a stiff attitude and with exceeding gravity to the speech of the musician: at hearing this request, he, with a bow as profound as ever, walked with stately steps to the nearest chair, and put it down close beside her, with another bow of the like sort; but the old gentlewoman remained standing till her companion had placed a chair for himself over against her own, and then the two looking upon each other with immovable gravity sank gradually and at the same moment into their respective seats.

"For this courtesy, noble madam, I tender you my entire devotions," said Master Dulcimer respectfully.

"I could do no less for one that cometh with the recommendation of my illustrious kinsman," answered the other, holding up her head as high as she could. "But how fareth my Lord of Essex? I would fain know something certain of his health and well-doing; and you, Master Dulcimer, having parted with him but lately, must needs be the fittest intelligencer I could meet with. Time was, I had no need of learning what was going on at court, I being at that time in some honor there myself; but the degeneracy of the age is such as hath made me prefer a life of retirement to all the honors the queen's majesty could confer on me. I pray you, tell me how fareth my noble kinsman?"

"Bountifully as his princely disposition deserveth," replied her companion, displaying a pouncet-box, the which he occasionally put to his nose. "Indeed, it is very much as your ladyship hath but now most justly remarked. Things are not now as they were. The times can not boast of such infinite choice accommodations as have existed in my remembrance. Methinks the world is wearing—nay, I am in some doubts it be not clean threadbare. Ah! what would I give to meet with such musicians as I have known, who could sing their part of a madrigal without previous study, and, mayhap, play an accompaniment at the same time."

"'Tis a rare accomplishment, Master Dulcimer," observed the old dame, with a conscious satisfaction showing itself in the very gravity of her countenance, "a rare accomplishment, beyond all manner of doubt: yet the great practice I have had from my youth in singing and playing on the virginals, maketh it to me a thing of easy performance."

"Say you so, indeed, honored madam!" exclaimed the other, with a look of pleased surprise. "Then am I fortunate above all measure. I have searched far and near amongst the young gentlewomen of the day, yet found I none so advanced in the exquisite sweet art as to be capable of what you have reported of yourself."

"Ah, Master Dulcimer!" cried Aunt Deborah, in her usual tone and manner. "In my time, girls were brought up in an honest fashion, and being ever of a very notable obediency, applied themselves diligently to the doing of what they were set upon. What famous cloth of tissue have I had a hand in the working of—ay, and goodly counterpanes and coverlets, and all manner of curious needlework. Then, in confectionary and in the making of wines and cordials, I was excelled by none; and so proficient was I in my music that there was no three or four part song I was afraid to join in. Though I say it, Master Dulcimer, 'tis not easy to meet with a young gentlewoman so well accommodated as was I. But I marvel not at all at it. The degeneracy of the age is such that no better can be expected than the infinite lack of excellency that distinguisheth the present time. My dainty young madam now must needs go to Paris garden when she should be at her virginals; and careth more to be loitering her time away in a

room at the playhouse, than to be playing the part of a good huswife in her own house."

"In truth, I do prefer that which I have seen in my youth to aught that the present age affords," observed her companion. "Yet is there one gratification left me for which I am prodigiously thankful. I remember me the exceeding beauteousness, the exquisite sweet grace, and the right excellent accomplishments of that star of the court of Queen Mary, Mistress Deborah Varnon, and to find such great skill, such marvellous comeliness, and such admirable fine wit, still adorning the world wherein I am allowed to move, produce in me so rare a comfort as nothing else under heaven can bestow."

During this courteous speech, which was delivered with a seriousness of countenance, and expression of voice, it is impossible to describe, Aunt Deborah frequently bent her head in acknowledgment of the compliments she was receiving, and fanned herself with an air of greater stateliness than ever.

"Said you that you had written some new madrigals, Master Dulcimer?" inquired the old dame, in an indifferent sort of voice, as if she cared not for being so talked of.

"Indeed have I," replied the muscian, "and such as divers of my friends have well commended; but though these are persons of worship, and considered to be of a very absolute fine taste, I can not help being careless of their opinion while I lack the praise of so exceeding nice a judge as Mistress Deborah Varnon." Again that lady bowed her acknowledgments. "Such as I have done are for four voices, whereof the first part hath, by some ladies who have essayed the singing of it, been pronounced too difficult to be sung without a wonderful deal of study, and then, so it hath been said by them, it shall chance not to go so well as it ought. For mine own part, I doubt much whether any be so well skilled in music as to perform it at sight."

"In the first place, there is a voice short," said Dame Deborah; "in the next, you have not your madrigal at hand, else would I prove to you, Master Dulcimer, that there be no difficulties in singing I can not master."

"And have you three voices at command?" inquired her companion.

"There is myself for the first," replied she; "there is my niece, whom I have made next in skill to myself, for the second; and the third you can supply of your own ability: provide you a fourth, and set your madrigal before me, I doubt not it shall be done justice to."

The musician appeared to reflect a few moments with a wonderful thoughtful countenance, and at last said:—

"I know not how it may be brought about, yet if it could be, I should like it well."

"What mean you, Master Dulcimer?" inquired Aunt Deborah.

"There is my boy waiting below with with my cittern and music," answered he. "Now he hath as proper a voice as you might wish to hear; and having been long taught of myself, is cunning in all manner of singing."

"If he can bear himself discreetly, let him join us," observed his companion, who seemed anxious to convince the musician of her own skill in minstrelsey.

"For discretion he can not be excelled," replied the other; "but he is of a simple nature. Indeed he hath so wonderful a shyness with regard to ladies, that he can not bear to be looked at in the face by any."

"Since that be his humor, I will not gaze on him at all," said Aunt Deborah.

"I implore you not to do so on any account," added Master Dulcimer, "else you will so put him out, that his voice will leave him on the sudden."

"Neither I nor my niece shall regard him in any way, rest assured," answered the old lady; "and now, if you are for the trial of your madrigal, I will give orders that your boy come here, and we will about it without loss of time."

Joseph was summoned, and commanded to send Master Dulcimer's boy to them; immediately after which Dame Deborah and her visiter rose from their seats at the same moment, and she courteously giving him her hand, went sailing proudly along in all her finery, while he, quite as stiffly, walked at her side, and led her to a seat before the virginals.

"I charge you, Mistress Varnon, look not at this youth who is about to join in our singing," said she, addressing her niece with a most profound gravity; then, turning to her gallant companion, courtesied with a marvellous solemnity, as he bowed himself to the ground, and then, with the same deliberate stateliness, seated herself before the instrument. This had scarce been done when the door opened, and there entered a youth humbly apparelled in a suit of Lincoln green, seemingly of a great modesty; for his eyes were fixed on the ground, and he

carried his master's cittern and music so before him, that of his face but little could be seen.

While Master Dulcimer was tuning of his cittern, sitting down close beside Aunt Deborah, to whom he kept addressing frequent observations relating to the music he had placed before her, Mistress Varnon was standing behind her aunt, holding with one hand a copy of the same madrigal, which was also held in one hand by Master Dulcimer's boy, (or man he might be called by his stature), who stood at her elbow; and she appeared wondering much at the oddness of such a performance. All at once she felt her disengaged hand touched by her companion; and not being desirous of such a familiarity from one of so mean a quality as a musician's boy, she snatched away her hand with some indignation. Presently she felt it touched again, and being mightily enraged at the impudency of the fellow—forgetting the injunction of her kinswoman, she turned round to give him a look which should convince him she was not to be so meddled with by such mean persons; but scarce had her eyes fallen on his face when she uttered a short scream, and let go her hand from the music.

"What meaneth this?" exclaimed Dame Deborah, turning quickly round, at the same moment that the boy moved his face in an opposite direction, and seemed to be quietly intent on looking into his part.

"Nothing, aunt," replied Mistress Varnon, endeavoring to conceal her confusion. "That is—I only—I mean I felt—it was but a small matter, aunt—a sudden pain. 'Tis going off now."

"Let it go off, and quickly then," said her kinswoman, with exceeding seriousness; "I marvel at your want of discretion in having sudden pains at such a time. Attend to your part, and put not out the boy with any such follies."

"Here we again return to the major chord," observed Master Dulcimer, drawing her attention back to the madrigal: and she was soon so occupied with listening to his explanations that she could think of no other matter. The boy was once more at the side of Mistress Varnon, and they held the music betwixt them as before. But his impudency exceedeth all description; he took her hand, and, what seemeth equally unpardonable, she allowed him to retain it. Nay, not only did she now exhibit no sign of indignation, but she ever and anon smiled on him as graciously as if none could be held in such esteem of her. All parties being at last ready, they commenced singing of the madrigal, the words of which are here written.

"Come, shepherds, come, and whilst our lambkins play,
And every friend and neighbor
Dance to the pipe and tabor,
We'll make sweet music with our roundelay.
Come, shepherds, come!

"Hark! how from out yon green umbrageous bower
Rise tuneful pastorals
And pleasing madrigals,
That fill with melody the jocund hour.
Come, shepherds, come!

"Now, let us rival them till they take wing,
And round about us throng,
To hear our sweeter song,
As on the daisied ground we sit and sing,
Come, shepherds, come!

"Then, with pale lady's smocks and king cups yellow,
And pansies newly blown,
We'll fashion forth a crown,
For him who singeth better than his fellow.
Come, shepherds, come!"

It so happened that Aunt Deborah, not liking to put on her spectacles before so perfect a gallant, according to her notion, as seemed Master Dulcimer, was obliged to keep her face close to the music; and so her whole attention was taken up. Perchance it was well it was so; for had she been allowed opportunity for noticing what was going on behind her, I doubt not she would have been greatly scandalized. Never were appearances more deceptive than in Mistress Varnon and the musician's boy. The exceeding innocency of the one, and the marvellous shyness of the other, must needs have been nothing better than a catch; for, during the singing of the madrigal, not only did the one allow the other to take her hand, but when he had the presumption to raise it to his lips, she cared not even to frown at him. It may well be believed that they two were somewhat heedless in their singing. In truth, they did put out the others more than once, to the wonderful vexation of Aunt Deborah; but the old gentlewoman went through her part without halting in a bar; and though her voice was none of the strongest, she sung with a correctness and expression that was somewhat marvellous at her time of life. At the end, so liked she the madrigal, or the praises Master Dulcimer did lavish on her singing, that she must needs have it gone through again, to the which all, evidently in a like humor with herself, cheerfully acceded. Now must I notice a fresh instance of most improper conduct of the

young pair standing behind; for whilst Master Dulcimer was diligently singing and playing on his cittern, and therefore could not see what his boy was at, and Aunt Deborah's countenance was close upon the music, and could have no notion of what her niece was about, that very boy who was said to be of so monstrous a shyness he could not bear to be looked in the face of any woman, had got his arm round the waist of the lovely Mistress Varnon, singing away as carelessly as you please, whilst she, with a countenance as modest as an angel's, delightedly sang her part, and seemed in no way displeased at his abominable impudency. But of all extraordinary things, was the contrast betwixt the wonderful gravity and the absolute stateliness of Aunt Deborah and Master Dulcimer, with the arch, handsome, youthful, happy faces behind them.

After this they did essay other compositions of the same nature, whereof the greater part were so singularly liked of the old gentlewoman, or else she was so well pleased with the appearance and behavior of the musician, that she must needs show him her garden, where they stayed alone together some time, and pressed him very courteously to come as oft as he desired to her, and bring his boy also; the which he promised to do; and then—the boy taking his cittern and music in as humble and shy a manner as ever was seen—with an abundance of the same respectful bows that marked his entrance, that were duly acknowledged with a like number of profound courtesies from the lady, Master Dulcimer at last took his leave of her.

Scarce had they well got out of view of the house, when the boy, again dropping of his humility and shyness, burst out into a loud laugh.

"By this hand, Master Shakspeare," exclaimed he, very merrily, to his associate, "never saw I any old woman so thoroughly deceived."

"Said I not, my Lord Southampton, I would procure you speech with your mistress before the day was over?" inquired the other, in his natural voice, who, out of all doubt, was no other than that most witty and ingenious gentleman just named.

"Indeed you did, and you have well kept your promise," replied his companion; "but I must confess I had huge doubts of your success; for who could suspect for a moment so perfect a transformation. O' my life so exquisite stately were you, I more than once found myself doubting your identity."

"I am a player, my good lord," answered Master Shakspeare, with a smile; "and it is our vocation to be the very creatures of change. We are kings or beggars, priests or sinners, as there may be occasion. The bed of Procrustes, that is said to have stretched those who were too short for it, and cut down such as were too long, had much of the players' art, for we make all characters fit us whether they will or no. As for the playing of a music-master, it can be no great matter, seeing what assistance I have had from mine esteemed friend Master Dowland: nor can it be surprising I should so readily cozen the old dame, when it is remembered how much I learned of you of her particular humor."

"I did more than once fear we should be discovered," observed my Lord Southampton; "for sometimes I could scarce help from laughing at seeing how preposterous fine and proud you looked, and with what a monstrous gravity the ancient gentlewoman regarded your antiquated gallantries."

"In honest truth it was droll enough," replied his companion: "but that was nothing to my being obliged to listen, whilst in the garden with her, to the very bitterest abuse of one Will Shakspeare, who, as she said, was turning the heads of all the women of the court with his abominable vile comedies and interludes."

"I'faith that was exceeding good," exclaimed the other, laughing heartily; "but said you not a word in his favor?"

"Had he been a drunken turnspit he could not have received less courtesy at my hands," answered Master Shakspeare, in the like humor; and thus they proceeded, laughing and jesting at their adventure, till they came to a by-lane in the neighborhood of Islington, where a caroch was waiting, into which they presently got, and were speedily driven home to their lodgings.

CHAPTER XXV.

And now a wind as forward as their spirits
Sets their glad feet on smooth Guiana's breast,
Where (as if each man were an Orpheus)
A world of savages fall tame before them,
Storing their theft-free treasures with gold.
CHAPMAN.

On, on, you noblest English
Whose blood is fet from fathers of war reproof!

Fathers that, like so many Alexanders,
Have, in these parts, from morn till even fought,
And sheathed their swords for lack of argument.
SHAKSPEARE.

In the morning of the next day, the city of San Josef de Oruño having been sacked of its valuables by the victors, who found great store of wealth in it, there was discovered, in a loathsome dungeon, five of the powerfulest native lords, chained, and dying of famine, after having been cruelly tortured, by the order of Don Antonio de Berrio, to make them say where they had hid their treasure. These were immediately liberated, and treated with exceeding attention by Sir Walter Raleigh. As soon as it was known that the power of the Spaniards had been overthrown in that island, the natives came flocking toward the city in great numbers, testifying, in every conceivable manner, how glad they were in their hearts that the iron rule of their oppressors had been put an end to. Sir Walter got them altogether, as many as were in the neighborhood, in a large plain outside of the city, and it was a goodly sight to behold so great a multitude of these people, all clad in divers colors, wonderfully discreet in their behavior, the most of them well limbed, and of comely faces, and regarding of their deliverers as a race from heaven. Sir Walter got the caciques about him, and then, by means of his interpreter, addressed them in a famous speech, explaining to them that he was the servant of a queen who was the powerfulest cacique in the world, and had under her more great chiefs than that island contained trees—that she had the very absolutest hatred for all sorts of oppression, and had sent him purposely to free them from the cruelty of the Spaniards, whose enemy she was on account of their treachery and tyrannical doings. Then he showed them a picture of Queen Elizabeth, on the which they gazed with wonderful veneration, and called out, in their language, that she was the mightiest princess on the earth; and it seemed as if they were almost inclined to worship the picture, so greatly had they been moved at the sight of it.

What he said having been explained to the people, there presently arose such shouts as was almost deafening to hear; and every one did exhibit his satisfaction in a manner that, however strange it might be to some of the English officers and soldiers, was as sincere as any that was ever seen. The Acarawana then made a famous oration concerning of how grateful were the people of that island at finding that the heart of the Great Spirit had been turned toward them in the midst of the afflictions they were enduring at the hands of their oppressors, and had sent to their assistance a band of his choicest warriors for the overthrowing of their tyrants. He proceeded at some length, detailing many horrible cruelties his countrymen had suffered of the Spaniards out of their desperate thirst of gold, till all who understood were moved with wrath and indignation against such villanies; and it was resolved that the city should be burnt down forthwith: the which, when the Indians came to know, there arose such rejoicings amongst them as was quite wonderful to behold; and at the desire of Sir Walter Raleigh they hastened to set it on fire. In a brief space it was blazing away in many places, whilst hundreds of the natives danced, and sung, and shouted about the burning building like so many mad people. In the meanwhile Sir Walter did inquire of divers of the caciques, some of whom were of the main land, and had been planted in Trinidad by Don Antonio, in hopes of their destroying they that were natural of the island, such particulars of Guiana as he thought they could give; and they quickly made him acquainted with all they knew.

Having liberated those of the Spaniards as were of the common sort, retaining only the governor and his officers till their ransom should be paid, Sir Walter departed to his vessels accompanied by great multitudes of the natives, carrying boughs of trees, and singing of his praises as if he were some mighty conqueror. When he had returned to Puerto de los Españoles he found that two more of his ships had arrived, the sight whereof pleased him mightily, and he made instant preparations for proceeding in search of El Dorado. Many were the plans that were considered before one was pitched upon, that was thought to be more practicable than the others for the purpose required, that had for its object the best means of navigating the great river Orinoco, up which they were about to proceed; but it was agreed at last, because only small vessels could be used, that an old gallego boat should be cut down into a galley, in the which he thrust with himself nigh upon sixty men, beside divers of his officers, his secretary, and Harry Daring—in the Lion's Whelp's boat and wherry he had other of his officers and twenty men, in another wherry

there were ten, and in Sir Walter's own barge ten also—making above a hundred in all. These carried victual for a month, and were well armed every one of them.

They rowed very famously from the open sea till they came to a stream, being the first Christians who had ever ventured therein, and Sir Walter in remembrance of his friend Master Spenser and his poem of the Faëry Queen, did call it the river of the Red Cross. Here they spied three Indians in a canoe, and saw divers others on the banks of the stream, which were shadowed by a thick wood, gazing on them with a singular curiousness. Wishing to have speech with those in the canoe, Raleigh gave chase, and having eight oars with him was enabled to overtake them before the Indians could reach the island. By means of his interpreter he spoke to them of his desire to traffic, and those on the shore seeing that no harm was offered to their countrymen, did take heart, and straightway came and trafficked for such things as they had, with a show of such great friendliness that it induced the interpreter Ferdinando to go with his brother to a village close at hand to fetch some fruit and make acquaintance with the natives; but when he had there arrived, the lord of the island was for seizing him and putting him to death because he had brought a strange nation into his territory to spoil and destroy him, the which when the brothers saw they showed their nimbleness of foot without loss of time, and were soon seen by Sir Walter and his companions pursued by the Indians with a great cry and tumult. Ferdinando's brother having most speed quickly made for the barge, crying out that his brother was slain; whereupon an old man of the Indians who was standing close by was laid hold of at the command of Sir Walter, and told that if Ferdinando was not let free they would cut off his head; and then the man cried lustily to his countrymen to save the interpreter: but they heeded him not at all, for they set a hunting of him with deer-dogs with so main a cry that the woods did echo with the noise.

It was debated whether the adventurers should land and by force carry off Ferdinando, but none knew where he was to be found, or what force the natives had in that island, so they kept coasting along the shore in hope of rescuing him should he make his appearance; and it so happened that he was presently seen to leap out of a tree where he had taken refuge, and swam to the barge more dead than alive. Sir Walter retained the old Indian, because he was natural of that place, and was like enough to know the navigation better than any stranger; and it was well he did, for it was soon discovered that Ferdinando knew nothing of these rivers and islands, and the old man proved them an admirable pilot.

They rowed on among many fair islands covered with an abundance of goodly trees, and having speech with the natives whenever they could find occasion, passing up the river with the flood, and anchoring during the ebb, when they had the ill hap to have their galley ground, and stick so fast she could not be moved anyhow, which made many in her fearful that they should be forced to take up their dwellings in these parts after the fashion of the natives, who build their houses high up in the midst of tall trees; but Harry Daring said he doubted not there was as exquisite fine fun to be had in trees as elsewhere; however, after casting out all her ballast, and with a monstrous deal of tugging and hauling, they again got her afloat. At the fourth day they fell into as fair a river to look on as eye ever saw, which was liked all the better for having but few windings; but when the flood of the sea left them, which it did at that place, they were forced to row with might and main against a violent current, every one of them, the gentlemen taking it in turns with the mariners and soldiers, which they did on being persuaded it was but two or three days' work. When that time had passed, the sun shining fierce upon them, and the tall trees that bordered the banks of the river shutting out the air, and the current against them becoming stronger every day, the companies began to despair; but the pilot promised them relief on the next day, and they pulled on as vigorously as they could. Notwithstanding this, many days were spent by them in the same way, till they were driven to short allowance. At last their bread being nigh the last morsel, having no drink at all, and being scorched and tired almost unto death, some did begin to speak harshly of the enterprise, and were for turning back; but Sir Walter talked to them very reasonably that it would be worse to turn back than to go on, they having no provision to look to unless they proceeded, the which if they did they would be sure to get all they wanted in a day or two at the utmost; whilst, should they attempt to return, they would either be starved on the way,

or escaping from that, be laughed at of the world for going of a fruitless errand.

Now all of them, both those in the galley and in the barge and wherries, had no victual left, and they would have been in very hard case indeed, but flocks of birds of all sorts of fine colors, carnation, crimson, orange, tawney, and purple, and some mixed, kept flying about, and by shooting of as many as they could, the people had wherewith to eat for some days more. The old Indian, who was now the pilot, seeing their extremity, offered to take them to a town of the Araucas, where they should find a store of all good things, both for eating and for drinking, but to get to it they must leave the galley at anchor, she drawing too much water to proceed up that branch of the river along which they must go; and departing at noon with the barge and the wherries, he undertook to return ere night with plenty of bread, hams, fish, and abundance of the country wines, for those that tarried behind. This upon consideration Sir Walter allowed, seeing that it was the best that could be done; therefore taking with him his secretary, two of his captains, and sixteen musketeers, he was for departing on the instant. Harry Daring did press very much to be of the party, but his commander would have him stay where he was, for this reason—that whilst divers of the companies when they were badliest off were nigh upon sinking with despair, he would keep them laughing as merrily as if they had naught to care for, by telling of them what laughable tricks he had played, and droll mischiefs he had done, when he was apprentice to the barber-chirurgeon in East Cheap; and Sir Walter thought that the men would be all the more patient if he tarried amongst them; therefore, assuring them of his speedy return to their relief, he proceeded on his way.

After six hours' hard rowing, the sun being set, and no sign of habitation visible—though the old Indian declared the town was so close at hand—they began to suspect he was betraying them, particularly as he said that the Spaniards who had escaped from Trinidad were with others of their nation in a village upon the river. As it grew toward night, and still there was no sign of any place, Sir Walter did question the pilot very closely; but he still kept saying it was nigh at hand—it was this turning and then that, at the which when they came and still finding no habitation, they were angered; and well they might be, for they had rowed forty miles without bit or sup, and were continually forced, worn and weary as they were, to cut with their swords a passage along the stream, because the branches of the trees did so cover the water. At last they determined to hang their pilot; but he implored so earnestly for them to go a little further, that they spared him yet awhile.

Although every one of the party were exceeding faint and vexed at the great way they had come to so little purpose, and of the monstrous labor they had had to get there, they could not help admiring the beauty of the country on both sides of them. By Master Francis the sight was enjoyed more than any other, because of Sir Walter's anxiety for his followers, and their care for themselves which engrossed their thoughts, but the former feasted his eyes on the beautiful scenes that lay before him, illumined by the silvery moonlight, till he forgot hunger, and thirst, and weariness. Besides, it was a great contrast to what they had been passing for so many miles, which seemed naught but woods and prickly bushes, for what he now saw were plains of some twenty miles in length, having the grass short and green, which was marvellous refreshing to the eye, with here and there groves of trees, as if the most wonderful art had been used in the planting of them, whilst as they rowed along, the deer came down feeding at the water's side, as tamely as if they had been used to a keeper's call.

At last, about an hour after midnight, they saw a light afar off, which they made for presently, and soon heard the dogs of the village barking in full chorus. Here they quickly arrived, and though there were but few people left in it, the cacique having, it was said, gone with most of his people up the Orinoco, to trade for gold and to buy women of the cannibals, a dwelling was provided for Sir Walter and his men, where all were hospitably entertained, and promised in the morning to have as much of such things they required as they could carry with them. Raleigh and his companions retired to rest themselves as soon as they could, for to sleep off the fatigues they had endured. Master Francis did not remain long before he was in a sound slumber, from the which waking earlier than the others, and not being inclined to sleep again, he passed out of the house without waking any, being curious to see the place. Meeting with none as he

went on, for scarce any of the natives were out of their houses, he strolled along, much pleased with the comfortableness of the dwellings, and the exceeding pleasantness of the scenery around him, till he came to a grove of tall trees, many bearing sweet blossoms, and some loaded with fruit very delicate to the eye. Numberless small birds were up and tuning of their merry pipes to a pleasant harmony; and there were others of a more brilliant plumage who flew about the verdant branches, making a wonderful noise certainly: yet was there in it a great lack of music.

Having proceeded some way, enticed along by the delightfulness of what he beheld, he was bending down the more closely to examine a curious flower that had struck his eye, growing nigh unto the root of a tree, when all of a sudden he felt a huge cloak thrown over him, in the which his arms were pinioned so that he could not move them in the least, and then being forcibly gripped, he was hurried along, not knowing where he was going or what he was to be done with. He cried out as well as he could, for he was so muffled up he could scarce speak: but in a moment he heard a voice at his elbow, which, to his great astonishment he recognised as that of Padre Bartolomé, telling him to hold his prate or he should have a bullet through his head. He marvelled at this hugely, because he knew not that he had ever done him any offence; but hearing as he went along the voice of one and then of another, all talking Spanish, he surmised that he had fallen into the hands of such Spaniards as had escaped from Trinidad, and he doubted not they were going to revenge on him the overthrow they received at San Josef de Oruño.

Presently he felt himself lifted on a horse, whereon one got up behind him and held him fast; and directly after that they set a galloping as fast as they could. He could tell by the noise that there were at least some five or six horsemen. They scarce ever said a word one to another; but that was nothing strange, seeing that they were going at so great a pace. Master Francis had made up his mind that he was to be killed, but this in his own heart he cared but little for of itself; for he was of a truly courageous disposition though of a modest nature, and was more to be depended on in such a strait than they who bear it more bravely when no danger is at hand. He thought this life could be but of small value, since the meanness of his birth took from him all hope of honorable advancement, and Joanna's ill conduct had deprived him of every reasonable expectation of happiness. Still he could not help thinking there were those he liked not the parting with so suddenly—to wit, such true friends as Sir Walter Raleigh, Master Shakspeare, and Harry Daring, whom he loved so in his heart, that he would give the world to see again were it possible. Then he took to thinking of the manner of death it was most like he should die. He could not bear that he should be hanged like any mean villain. And then he wished they had but given him time to draw his rapier, he would on no account have allowed himself to be taken alive. At last, considering that his end was drawing nigh, he thought 'twould be but Christian-like to forgive those who had done him wrong; and from his very heart he did forgive Joanna the treachery she had played him; and as he did so, he could not but grieve that a creature who had appeared to him of so superlative an excellence, should at last take to the doing of such villanies as he believed she had done.

At this time his reflections were put a stop to by the party coming to a sudden halt. He was lifted from the horse and sat down on the ground with his back leaning against what he thought was a tree. By the talking they made he could hear they did intend taking some refreshment, whilst the horses were allowed to crop the herbage around them ere they proceeded on their journey; but whilst they were sitting of themselves down, preparing to make what good cheer they might, Master Francis heard all at once a great screaming and yelling close at hand, and a noise of missiles rushing through the air, and afterwards a rush of many persons toward him. At first, he could only marvel what it all meant; but hearing the groans and execrations of the Spaniards, he guessed they had been set upon, and in a moment after he found himself unbound, with a many armed Indians gazing upon him with strange and curious looks. Taking of a hurried glance around him, he observed that all the Spaniards were slain with arrows and spears, excepting only Padre Bartolomé, whom some of the Indians were binding with cords, and talking to all at once in a monstrous furious manner; but, Master Francis, knowing not their language, could only guess they were wrath with the priest, and meant him some harm.

After the same fashion behaved they not to him; for they did converse one to another with very wondering looks, and then seemed they to put questions to him with more mildness than he could have expected of them. Thinking they were desirous of knowing what he was, and how he came there, he was for telling them in Spanish, but he had scarce uttered a sentence when their looks turned to fury, and they beat him with blows, and bound him hand and foot, and talking furious and fast, with many signs, gave him to understand they would have his life.

Believing that they took him for a Spaniard, he then addressed them in English, whereupon they again looked to one another as if not knowing what to think of it; and he strove by signs to make them understand he was an enemy to the Spaniards, and had by them been surprised and taken prisoner. Whether they understood this, or were favorably disposed toward him on account of the comeliness of his appearance I know not, but certain it is that after much talking amongst themselves, they unbound his cords; yet did they make signs to him the whilst, that if he sought to escape he should be speared on the instant. Presently they brought him some singular sort of roots, which seeing of an Indian eat before him, he took to the tasting of, and found it to be such excellent meat, that he eat plentifully; and then they gave him to drink wine of the country, which would have been all the more pleasant had there not been such quantity of pepper in it. Notwithstanding this, he felt wonderfully refreshed of the victual he had had; and had great hopes that by their treating of him so bountifully they bore him no ill will. All this while many of them came crowding round him, examining his dress very curiously, and asking of him abundance of questions, which, though he knew not the meaning of, he would strive to answer as he best might, but always in English, which never failed to set them talking to one another with such looks as proved it astonished them mightily.

He saw not Padre Bartolomé again for some days, but being allowed his liberty, though he was closely watched, he noticed that his captors were some two hundred in number, well armed with spears and other Indian weapons, and appeared to be returning from some war expedition, but this was no more than his conjecture, for he could have no certain knowledge about the matter. Let this be as it may, he journeyed with them for the space of many days through great plains and forests, and along rivers, and over mountains and rocks, all so grand and beautiful, that it appeared to him the most marvellous sight he had ever witnessed: and sometimes he went with them a hunting the deer, wild boars, and divers savage beasts natural to those parts, the like of which he had never seen before. He had wonderful entertainment from the Indians, for they feasted him with venison and pork, and flesh of many different birds, with roots that made a right admirable substitute for bread; and with plenty of wine, so that he lacked nothing. Indeed, he might have been happy did he not often find himself a thinking of how Sir Walter Raleigh might be put to by his absence, and how Harry Daring would take on; but as he found that there was no help at present, he did wisely determine to make the best of it he could, and did so demean himself as to win the good will of all about him.

At one time whilst they were about to rest themselves for the night upon an exceeding high mountain up which they had been toiling the whole of the day, Master Francis spied the Jesuit, still in his bonds, sitting by himself upon a block of stone, and regarding him with looks so gloomy and revengeful, that the young Englishman was quite moved at it. Master Francis knew that he had done him no ill office, and he could scarce think it possible that national prejudice should go so far as to become such deadly hatred. Desirous of knowing for what cause the other looked at him so maliciously he made up to him; but he had only got to within a few paces of the stone on which the padre sat, when he found himself laid violent hold of, and dragged back by those of the Indians who had seen his intention. They then looked frowning upon him, and did threaten him, as he understood, if that he ever essayed to speak with the priest again, they would as good as kill him for it. This made him more cautious, for it may well be imagined he had no desire of getting his death for paying of any courtesies to one who seemed as though he would gladly be his destruction.

They travelled on for some time longer, amidst an exceeding wild country till they came to a goodly city, wherein they were welcomed by crowds of Indians who flocked out of their houses to meet them

with great shoutings, and clanging of noisy instruments — men, women, and children, clad in dresses of divers colors. At first there were many amongst them that did regard Master Francis with most sinister aspects, reviling and jeering of him, and seeming to triumph over him as if he were an enemy taken in battle; but when something was said to them by those he was amongst, they did abuse him no more, nor regard him in any sort than with a very marvellous curiousness. As for Padre Bartolomé, there could not be a question as to their treatment of him. They cast dirt on him as he went; they spat on him, they screamed, they yelled, they danced for very joy; naught could exceed the wonderful pleasure they seemed to find in the sight of him. But he regarded them not at all. He passed along with his fine eyes fixed upon the glowing heavens with a most pious expression of countenance, as if his spirit was in such strict communion with his Creator he could not regard for a moment the din that was going on around him. His hands were tied behind his back, and he was strictly guarded; yet walked he with a proud step, more like that of a conquerer than a captive: and looked such resignation and hope as if he would needs appear like one of the right famous martyrs of old, who did suffer extreme persecution of the heathen, even unto death, rather than give up their faith in the life everlasting.

Nothing astonished Master Francis so much as the wonderful quantity of gold that was worn by the natives. They had armlets, bands for the ankles and for the forehead; plates that hung about the joints, rings and chains, all solid, and curiously wrought; and these shining in the sun, had a singular fine and brilliant effect; but when he came into the city and saw the insides of the houses, and beheld the commonness of this precious metal, for it appeared to be made into every sort of thing that could be named, as if its abundance was beyond all comparison, he marvelled ten times the more. In this place he abode many days, being well cared for, having to eat all kinds of fish, flesh, and fowl, that could be procured, with fruit in great plenty; tortoise eggs, which he found to be a very wholesome meat; and wine of a good sort, as much as he could drink of it: and he saw nothing of Padre Bartolomé all this time, for the priest was kept close in durance, having scanty fare, and usage of the hardest; but at last there came a command from the king of all these parts, that the stranger should be sent to the imperial city, where he was, for him to see the prisoners, and judge how they should be disposed of. Then Master Francis and the Jesuit were straightway set on two of the horses taken of the Spaniards, and accompanied by a strong guard to prevent escape; and proceeded on their journey to the city of the king.

After passing a great distance through a fine open country, rich with verdure, and of a most delicate aspect, when a many days had elapsed, they approached a magnificent city, which was the place they were in quest of. Master Francis could see, as he came nigh unto it, that it was a famous large place; and noticing of the vast numbers that were thronging in its vicinity, some going and some coming, he did judge that it was well populated. The first thing that did give him a proper estimation of the wonderful riches of the city, was the great gates, which, to his exceeding astonishment, he saw were made of the solid gold, and wrought in all manner of beautiful figures of men, and beasts, and birds, and flowers, with such extreme cunning that he marvelled as much at the skilfulness of the workmanship as at the costliness of the material. Discoursing with one of his guard, for he had picked up some little knowledge of the language, he learned that the riches of this city was considered to be far beyond that of any place in the world, for there were in it four-and-twenty gates of a like fashion and fabric; and the quantity of the same precious metal, wrought up into idols, monuments, altar places, and the like, was beyond all calculation. Hearing this, and beholding, as he proceeded along through the broad thoroughfares, the strongest evidence that what he heard was no other than the truth, he did from it imagine that he was in that right famous place called El Hombre Dorado, or the Man of Gold; of the which divers notable commanders of the Spaniards had searched for in vain; and for the discovery thereof Sir Walter Raleigh had got together so brave an expedition; and, as imagination was strengthened into certainty by his guides telling him the city was called Manoa, it did create in him a singular curiousness to observe, as closely as was possible, this wonderful place.

As he rode onward he could not but marvel at the sight of such goodly structures, that seemed like unto palaces, all the way long. Presently he would come

to some open space, in the midst of which there was set up a huge figure of some idol, whereof he saw a great many, all wrought out of the solid gold, and the crowds of natives dressed in the costliest silks and fine cloths, some walking, and some riding on prancing steeds, the harness of which was covered over with gold and jewels, were wonderful to look upon, for the beauty and variety of their apparelling. They seemed, for people of so dark a skin, an exceeding handsome race;—the women remarkably so, having well disposed bodies and comely countenances; eyes dark and penetrating, and hair very long and black, the which, in many instances, was powdered with gold dust, that did have a marvellous shining effect; the most of them wore gold anklets and armlets, very thick, and some curiously cut and set in with precious stones, and some wore so many plates of the same metal that they kept up a constant jingling as they walked along, from the pieces knocking one against another.

Master Francis was made to halt at a building of wonderful size and stately aspect, story above story, and tower above tower, with figures upon them, all of gold, stretching out over a vast space of ground. As he approached it by one of many wide streets of goodly mansions that led to where it stood, quite apart in an open plot of ground, he observed divers companies of armed Indians, doubtless soldiers, led by their lords, or caciques, arrayed in most sumptuous fashion, marching with bands of warlike instruments, that made a monstrous clang, some going and some coming away—some of horse and some of foot; and there being a marvellous high flight of steps all around, to reach the gates of this palace, it was a pretty sight to see the foot soldiers ascending and descending, with their spears glancing in the sun, their feathers waving in the breeze, and their draperies of the very brightest colors, together with the abundance of gold ornaments they wore, looking more beautiful and costly than the most extreme cunning with the pen could describe. Having dismounted, Master Francis had to ascend the steps with his guard, which was a work of some labor, there being a hundred steps to go up; and then passing along a level way of fine polished marble, which was covered with a crowd of Indians, seemingly of all sorts and conditions, going in and out, he entered the palace by one of the many golden gates it had, whereof he was told there were fifty, all of a like splendor and massiveness with the one he now saw, which was indeed the most magnificent thing to see eye of his ever beheld.

Here some of those he was with did have speech with a chief or officer of the guard, who stopped them; and hearing of their business, hurried them on, himself leading the way, telling them that the king was sitting in council with his wise men, and had given orders that the strangers should immediately, on their arrival be brought before them, to be done by as they should think fit. After passing through vast halls and long spacious passages, and up broad flights of steps, meeting with a great crowd of the natives, seeming to be officers, priests, soldiers, and the like, appearing to be intent upon some important business or another, they at last arrived at an anteroom, which was guarded on both sides by rows of Indians, with long spears standing up much higher than themselves, where they waited till some went to announce their arrival to the king; which having been done, after a short delay Master Francis and Padre Bartolomé, uncovered, were allowed to advance into the council chamber.

Upon entering, the first thing which attracted the attention of Master Francis was a splendid throne, supported by figures of leopards, wrought in solid gold, and blazing with all manner of sapphires, carbuncles, emeralds, diamonds, pearls, and divers other precious stones; and on it, upon cushions of embroidered silk, there sat a man of a mild, yet majestic countenance, clothed in robes of the very richest sort, and wearing beside the most costly armlets, anklets, and plates of gold all about him, and rings, and chains, and rare gems, a tiara of the same precious metal, set in with diamonds and rubies of the very largest and purest kind. Round him, in a semicircle, seated on thrones, less elevated, but of almost equal costliness, were the wise men of the council, which seemed to be such as were selected for their great knowledge, for they did appear to be of a wonderful gravity, and were clothed in long robes of white cloth bordered with gold. Padre Bartolomé was desired to prostrate himself immediately upon his entering, which he did, with an affectation of great reverence; but Master Francis liked not the

behaving with such humility to a mere mortal, and could not be got to do aught save the making of a respectful bow, which it was evident angered many in that assembly, for some did regard him with stern and forbidding glances.

An interpreter being present, who was the chief priest, and was one that had lived with the Spaniards till he was as familiar with their language as with his own, the padre was asked if the other white man, meaning Master Francis, was a Spaniard, many of the Indians having asserted he talked a different tongue, and was of an entirely different nation. Then up spoke the wily Jesuit, exceedingly to his companion's astonishment, and may-hap instigated of the devil to do it, saying, that not only was he a Spaniard, although he spoke a foreign tongue, wanting to pass himself off as of a different country, but that he was the chief counsellor of the governor Don Antonio de Berrio, and had instigated him to do those cruelties against the Indians of which such loud complaint had been made. At the hearing of this, it was easily seen that the king and all his council were moved to a great wrath. Master Francis was so taken by surprise at the hearing of so atrocious a calumny that he knew not what to say or do; and, by his judges, his confusion was taken as a sign of guilt.

They then examined the padre as to what were the designs of himself and party in entering the territory of Guiana, and he answered that he was but a man of peace, and merely accompanied the others at their request, to give them such good instruction as they stood in need of; that the command of the party was intrusted to his companion, and that its object was to fall upon the Indians in some village or another, murder them, and take away their gold. At this the assembly were more wrath than at first: and when Master Francis sought to deny what had been so falsely said of the other, they would scarce hear him, and the king, having taken the opinion of his wise men, did speak with great bitterness of the inhuman cruelties of the Spaniards in their inordinate search after gold, and then adjudged Master Francis to be sacrificed to his gods, whilst Padre Bartolomé should be kept close prisoner. When the priest heard this sentence he turned on his companion a look of fiendish exultation, which the other returned only with one of wonder and pity.

CHAPTER XXVI.

He that is thy friend indeed
He will help thee at thy need;
If thou sorrow he will weep,
If thou wake he can not sleep;
Thus of every grief in heart,
He with thee doth bear a part.
SHAKSPEARE.

There is no grief, no smart, no wo,
That yet I feel or after shall,
That from this mind may make me go;
And whatsoever me befall,
I do profess it willingly
To serve and suffer patiently.
SIR THOMAS WYATT.

Talbot. I mean to prove this lady's courtesy. Come hither, captain! (*whispers.*) You perceive mind?
Captain. I do, my lord, and mean accordingly.
SHAKSPEARE.

UPON Sir Walter Raleigh's rising in the morning and missing Master Francis he did marvel exceedingly. Every place was searched for him, and every inquiry set on foot, but one or two only of the natives had had sight of him as he was walking toward the grove, and after sending parties hither and thither, and finding no trace of him, Sir Walter was obliged to return to his boat, because of those who were waiting for victual. He knew not what to think. It was not likely his secretary should have been devoured by savage beasts, because there was none known to frequent those parts, nor was it probable that he had been set upon and slain by the Indians, because of their hospitable character, and of the great interest they showed when it was made known to them one of the white men had disappeared from amongst them. No man could be more downcast at anything than was Sir Walter. He offered great rewards—he spared neither trouble nor expense, but it was all unavailing; and on his voyage back loaded with provision for those of his followers he had left behind him, he could scarce speak a word. In truth, he loved Master Francis as a son; and his loss did affect him more than anything he had ever endured.

If Sir Walter was thus moved, how much more strongly did the intelligence of his friend's disappearance affect Harry Daring. He was like one distracted—he did abuse all around for a parcel of pitiful rogues and villains for coming back without bringing his true friend with them; and was for starting himself quite alone and on the instant to fetch him away in spite of everything; but Sir Walter Raleigh, though he could not but pardon the intemperance of his language, knowing of what disposition he was, and

how much he was attached to the other, would have him go on no account, because he believed it would be a fruitless and a dangerous errand for him to set out on alone, and he could not spare others at such a time; therefore he was held fast; notwithstanding which he spared none with his tongue; for he did rate them all after a fashion that must have angered many who knew not of what sort he was, and the provocation he had had. After a bit, finding that this was of no service, he appeared more tranquil, and said naught to any save the young Indian, with whom he was noticed to be frequently a whispering. His commander thinking that he was now resigned to the loss of his friend, took not so much heed of him, nor could he well, for his attention was taking up with looking after his own and the other boats, whereof the companies now, every one having feasted and drunk to his heart's content, were proceeding at a famous rate upon their voyage.

It did so happen that of a party that on the next day landed from the boats to traffic with the natives of a village on the banks of the river, Harry Daring and the Indian boy were of the number, and whilst all else were busily engaged, they two slipped away unobserved with what arms they had, and with such things as they had got ready for the occasion; and threading their way through the thorny bushes that grew along the water-side, and which completely shut them out from view, they came at last to where lay a canoe, into the which they got without loss of time, and commenced rowing away with all their strength to return the way they had come the day previous. None noticed them, either from the boats or on the land, their attention being taken up with the natives; and having the tide in their favor, they proceeded along very famously, Harry Daring in an admirable humor at having a chance of finding out his true friend, and the young Indian in as much delight with the prospect of seeing again his family, who knew not what had become of him. Though these two were boys, as it might be said, seeing that they were each scarce above sixteen or seventeen years of age, yet were they strong and of wonderful activity. The young Indian was somewhat about the tallest of the two, being a youth of a truly graceful figure, but Harry Daring was of a thicker make, and, though he had shot up since he had left England, he looked nothing better than a big boy.

They found in the canoe provisions enough for their wants and a plenty to spare, for it had been victualled for a party of Indians who were about going upon a voyage, so that they were enabled, yet not without vast labor and pains, to reach the village at which Master Francis had slept the morning he had been stole away. Here they were entertained in a like hospitable manner as their companions had been; and hearing from Harry's comrade in the adventure, upon what errand they had come, every facility was afforded them to pursue their search. Whilst Harry Daring was getting ready such things as he designed taking with him in the way of victual, a woman, who seemed to be natural of that place from her dress and complexion, did enter the room where he was, and call aside his companion, and they went out together. As many of the natives had done the same, because he alone could understand them, Harry did not much notice it, but went on with what he was a doing of. After an absence of nigh upon half an hour, the young Indian came running back to him, seemingly in a wonderful great pleasure and surprise.

"I have found where him gone to, Massa Harry!" exclaimed he, dancing about for very joy as it seemed.

"Where, where, Snowball, where?" quickly asked Harry with extreme earnestness. "Let me have sight of him on the instant. I be a longing to behold him again. Say where he is or I shall take thee to be but a sorry friend, and will presently forswear thy company."

"She tella me all, Massa Harry—she tella me all!" cried the young Indian.

"And who is *she*—and what did she tell thee?" inquired the other.

"Not know who she be, Massa Harry," replied his companion. "She one nobody know of. Very good woman for all dat. What for she come a me? She tella me secret I not tell you. What for she tella me secret! She know where Massa Francis gone, and she wisha me and you go wid her and take him away."

"A brave wench!—a brave wench!" exclaimed Harry Daring, overjoyed at the prospect of seeing his true friend. "And as for her secret, I be not at all curious, so there can be no fear of my knowing it. But where is she, Snowball? Can I not see her? Can I not have speech with her?"

"No, Massa Harry," answered the young Indian. "What for she say no? She say she no letta you see her, 'cause

in her country no woman show her face. She say she no have speech wid you, 'cause she no understanda what you say, and you no understanda what she say."

"By Gog and Magog! I care not so that she show me Master Francis," said the other. "Is he at any distance? Can I see him within a day or so?"

"She tella me he long, very long way off," replied his companion. "She get horse to ride on; and for you and for me. We go very fast gallop; by-and-by stop, horse him eat grass, we eat victual. When night come hang hamaca upon tree in forest; we go sleepa by turns. Wild beast come, Massa Harry shoot him bang, or me run him troo wid spear after fashion of my country. She sleeps very much quiet all the time."

"I'faith, 'twill be exquisite fine fun, Snowball?" exclaimed Harry; "and I don't care how soon we set about it."

"What for you call me Snowball, Massa Harry?" asked the young Indian. "My name be Pomarra, if you please, sir."

"Hang Pomarra!" cried Harry. "I dislike everything that be not honest English. Snowball be much the properest name for thee, so Snowball thou canst not help being."

A few hours after what hath been here related, Pomarra, Harry Daring, and an Indian woman were galloping along the very road the Spaniards took when they carried off Master Francis. The face of the female was concealed in the folds of a thin scarf or muffler, that allowed nothing to be seen but the eyes, which seemed to be of great brilliancy. The young Indian was completely under her guidance, and be it was, when they were at all at a loss, found out the path the Spaniards had taken by tracking their horses' feet. They passed the place where these latter had been set upon by the Indians, which they easily discovered by the stains of blood, which were yet fresh; and then proceeded onward at a good pace, only halting to get such refreshment as they needed.

At night they slept in a forest after the following fashion. An hamaca was slung from the branches of some trees, and first of all the Indian woman lay in it and went asleep for two or three hours, whilst Harry Daring and Pomarra kept watch, which they did very famously, because the one would keep the other awake by telling of him all manner of laughable stories of what tricks he had played when he was apprentice to the barber-chirurgeon in Eastcheap; and then when their female companion had slept sufficiently she would keep watch with the young Indian whilst Harry Daring slept, and when he had had enough, Pomarra turned in whilst the other two kept guard. One night a strange adventure happened to them, which had like to have put an end to their journey. Harry Daring was very intent upon the telling of how he had pulled out the old woman's two sound teeth instead of the one aching one, and the goodly rage she was in when she discovered it, when he was stopped in his narration by his companion's sudden exclamation of "Hist!" as he caught hold of his arm. Harry then noticed that the horses, which were fastened to the tree behind him, were plunging, snorting, and trembling wonderfully.

"Wild beast, Massa Harry," said his companion in a whisper.

"Spear him if I miss, Snowball!" whispered the other, as he took hold of a musket that was leaning against a tree at his elbow, and looked about him to notice where was his enemy. The night was clear and starlight, but the shadows of the trees kept a great portion of the ground around him in utter darkness. The hammock in which slept the Indian woman was elevated two or three feet from the ground, between two large trees, whereof the thick branches crossed each other, and round about were clumps of bushes, and tall grass, and weeds, much of which was enveloped in a deep shadow, but occasionally illuminated by myriads of fire-flies.

"Now, Snowball, dost see anything of the villain?" asked Harry, as with Pomarra close at his elbow, having a long sharp spear held in such a manner as to give all his force to it should it be required, he was looking cautiously about, with his gun ready to put to his shoulder upon the first occasion.

"Look in de bush, Massa Harry," whispered the young Indian, pointing to a cluft of underwood within a few paces of him. "See him big eye roll about like ball of fire."

The horses were every moment getting to be more restless, showing that one they liked not was in their neighborhood; and Harry Daring looking in the direction pointed out, and seeing something move, knew it was high time to be doing of something, so he stealthily crept a pace or two closer, that he might have all the better aim, and then bidding of his companion be ready, he raised his piece very quietly, kept his eye on the

barrel till it covered a spot between the two fiery balls that he could just see glaring at him out of the bush, pulled the trigger and fired. In the instant the report was heard, every bush in the neighborhood was in a stir; there was a rustle of wings, with screaming noises, from all the trees, and numberless figures that were scarcely distinguishable were observed stealing off as quickly as they could. At the same time an animal of a large size made a spring toward Harry Daring, as he was drawing of his hanger.

"This how Indian serve jaguar, Massa Harry," exclaimed Pomarra as, with a quick spring toward the enraged animal, he drove the spear into his heart with such a force that the beast tumbled backward, and died without a groan.

"Bravo! Snowball," cried Harry, as he stopped to examine the jaguar. "Methinks if the villain had once got hold of us, we should have fared but badly; and killing of such be infinite better sport than its killing of us. See! I hit him in the head, I thought 'twas scarce possible I could have missed him. But I must be after loading of my piece, in case of need."

"Ah! Massa Harry, wild beast very great plenty here," observed Pomarra, drawing of his spear from the dead jaguar, as his companion was loading his musket. "All round they come—creep, creep;—now you fire and killa him, and soon as you go bang, every fellow turn him tail and be off. What for him turn him tail? 'Cause him no like meddle with Massa Harry."

Harry Daring soon returned to his story; but he and his companion were not the only spectators of the scene just described, for at the report of the musket, the female in the hamaca started up, and stared at what was going forward with a countenance that did express wonder and alarm. Her face was uncovered, and though of a dark complexion, it seemed to be as comely as might be seen anywhere. The backs of her young defenders being toward her, they could see naught of her countenance, and she had full opportunity of noticing what they were about. When it was all over she lay down again, but she slept not any more that night. Not so the others, for when their turns came, they fell into as sweet and profound a slumber as ever they enjoyed.

They proceeded on their way, meeting with numberless adventures of a like hazardous nature, from which they were rescued by the readiness and true valor of Harry Daring. The young Indian was also of great value to them, for he was a complete child of the woods, and when their victual run short, told them of what wild fruits they might eat, and what they should let alone. Once Harry was about to poison himself by eating of the coco de mono, or monkey's nut, which grew in those parts, had not the other stayed him; and once he was for sleeping under the manchinsel-tree, the which would have been his death, had he been allowed; for Pomarra told him it was of so strong a nature, that to slumber beneath its leaves is certain destruction, and the juice of it corrodeth the flesh like unto vitriol. He did gather for them the cassava root, which when eaten moderately makes excellent victual, whether roasted or boiled; and he pointed out a climbing plant called bejuneo, with which having well rubbed his arms up to the elbows, he did freely take up sundry venomous snakes, whereof there seemed a great plenty thereabouts, and they harmed him none at all. Then had they to eat also as much of the flesh of many sorts of birds, deer, porks, and other animals they had a mind to, that Harry Daring shot, and then Pomarra, by rubbing of two dry sticks briskly, did kindle a fire, and roast after the fashion of his country, as he said. Their female companion also busying herself in getting of their meals, though she talked not, save to the young Indian, and that was only when he was at a distance from the other, and would show her face on no account. This Harry took no heed of, for he was one that troubled not his head about strange things, as long as he believed there was no treachery afoot.

They had exceeding difficulty in passing over a high mountain that lay in their path, for oftimes they were obliged to dismount from their horses and lead them by the bridle, there was such dangerous footing; but none murmured, or were in the least fearful, and they continued to make progress. As they were descending upon the other side down a very precipitous part, which had at the bottom a black and foaming torrent, crossed by a natural bridge of rock, so narrow it seemed scarce possible to pass over it, the horse of their female companion slipped as she was leading of it along, and Pomarra had just time to catch her by the waist and bid her let go the bridle, when the animal, after sliding down upon the narrow bridge, did plunge over the

edge of it, and was dashed from rock to rock, till he fell into the torrent beneath. All three looked over the precipice after him, and held their breath. It was a fearful sight to look upon, and few could have stood it unmoved. The female trembled; even the horses seemed smit with a sudden fear, for they stood stiff and still, as if they were of stone, and the young Indian appeared a little dismayed.

"By Gog and Magog!" exclaimed Harry Daring, breaking the silence which ensued. "What a fool was he to have gone that way, when had he but went as we wished him, he would have received no hurt." From this it was evident the accident had affected *him* but little. At last, by dint of great coaxing and encouragement, Pomarra managed to get his horse along, and the other followed. The Indian woman went first, holding of Pomarra's hand, who in a low voice seemed to be a speaking to her such comfort as he thought necessary, whilst with the other hand he held his horse's bridle, and conducted him carefully along the dangerous pathway. This, at last, after a monstrous circuitous fashion, led them to the bottom, where the first sight that did present itself to them was the body of an Indian hunter lying close upon that of a horse both dead, and evidently, from the appearance of them, had been dashed from the rocks above. There was what appeared to be a coil of hide rope, having two or three balls affixed to it, hanging at the saddle-bow, whereof when the young Indian saw he seized upon with an exclamation of delight, and then took off the bridle from the dead horse, which he threw over his arm. Pomarra then mounted his female companion before him, and they rode together through a sort of pass having high mountains on each side.

They emerged from this into an open plain, or at least were about to do so, when they stopped of a sudden, for there was observed a scene the like of which hath not been often met with. Three or four hundred wild horses were before them; some grazing quietly, some frisking about, others chasing of and biting at each other in sport, all of the most beautiful shapes eye ever beheld, and of different colors. Pomarra whispered to his companion to dismount, which she did on the instant, and asked Harry Daring to remain where he was till he called him, and notice what he did, which the other promised to do, then taking nothing with him but the coil of rope already described, he put his steed into a gallop and darted into the plain. As he approached, the wild horses left off what they were about, and huddled themselves together in a body with their heads turned toward him; but when he came within a few paces of them they wheeled round quick as lightning, and every one started off at so great a pace that the catching of any seemed quite out of the question. The ground trembled beneath their hoofs, and the sound they produced as they rushed along was like unto thunder. The young Indian was seen for a few minutes galloping after them at the top of his speed, with the halter of hide whirling round and round above his head. Suddenly he threw the end of the rope from him, and turned his horse round quick. A beautiful jet black colt at that moment rolled over and over on the ground, held fast by the rope which had been thrown over him, and was twisted round his body.

Pomarra then beckoned to Harry Daring to come on, who lost no time in riding up to the spot, having mounted the Indian woman before him as soon as his companion had entered the plain, and he could just notice the wild horses disappearing at the verge of the horizon, so rapid had been their pace. Both rode up to the horse they had captured, that lay as if stunned by the fall he had received. In this state the young Indian placed the bridle on his head, and then untwined the cord from about his limbs. Presently he rose from the ground, and as he did so Pomarra leapt on his back. No sooner was the horse conscious of the burthen then he exhibited the most violent impatience of it that ever was seen. He plunged—he reared—he kicked, and tried to turn round and bite his rider; then he would start off rapidly and stop of a sudden, all the while with mane and tail erect, and eyes terribly bright, snorting, and shaking, and pawing of the ground with a wonderful fierceness; yet the young Indian sat as firm on his back as if he grew there. Certes, it was a most delicate sight to see the two: the graceful animal showing the perfect symmetry of his shape in every movement, and the elegant figure of his rider displayed to marvellous advantage in the simple tunic worn by him, as his light limbs bent this way and that, according to the motion of the horse. Presently the latter started off with such extreme quickness that the eye could scarce follow him. His feet

seemed not to touch the ground, and ere many minutes had elapsed he had gone clean out of sight.

"By Gog and Magog! the horse hath run away with him!" exclaimed Harry Daring, who had neither been a silent nor an unadmiring spectator of the scene. "But if it please you, mistress, to keep your seat, I will mount the other horse, and we will be after them." The Indian woman said not a word to this; but as if she had some notion of what was meant, took the reins in her hand. "Hang me! if I have not forgot she could have no speech of me," continued he, and then added in some vexation, "A murrain on it! what a pestilent shame it be everybody can not speak honest English!" They then rode on together in silence for a brief space. At last they saw the wild horse coming toward them at a great distance with Pomarra on his back; but he returned not so fast as he went. As they rode nigher they could not but notice that the glossy coat of the animal was covered all over with a white foam that did drop from his sides most plenteously, and his eyes looked as though he were monstrously frightened. His great spirit had been conquered. He now paced along in entire obedience to the will of his rider.

After this they were riding along very quietly, only in some doubt as to whether they were in the right road, for they had lost all trace of those of whom they had been in pursuit for so many days, when Pomarra's quick eye noticed a single horseman making toward them. He hastily caught hold of his spear, which the Indian woman had been carrying for him.

"Now, Massa Harry, you see how me fight in my country," said he as he rode off very gallantly in the direction of the approaching horseman. Harry Daring, as soon as he heard the word fight, was for joining in it; but seeing that there was only one enemy, if enemy he were, he contented himself with quietly riding by the side of his companion, and watching the combatants. It was seen that the stranger was a young Indian, dressed very splendidly, as if he were of some account, and he carried with him no other weapon than a long spear like unto that of Pomarra. The two rode on as fast as they might with their weapons poised a little above the head, as if about to throw them, shouting such violent exclamations as were quite a wonder to hear. All at once, when within a few paces of each other, they reined in their horses with looks of wonder and surprise; each uttered a cry of exultation; each cast his spear into the ground; each rode alongside of the other; and in the next moment they were grasping of each other in a close and loving embrace, and uttering all sorts of affectionate cries.

"By Gog and Magog! that be the very strangest way of fighting I ever saw!" exclaimed Harry Daring. "Dost not think so, mistress? Hang me!" he added, when he found he received no answer. "I be always forgetting."

The two expected combatants, having taken hold of their spears again, were now riding slowly toward Harry and his companion. Pomarra talking as fast as he could, and seeming in a monstrous delight, and the other listening with exceeding earnestness. As they came nigher, Harry noticed the wonderful store of gold ornaments the stranger had about his person, and the trappings of his horse. He was of a very comely countenance, and of a well-disposed body, and seemed to be nigh upon twenty years of age.

"Dis my brudder, Massa Harry!" cried Pomarra, as he came up to Harry Daring. "I never tella you who I was. What for I no tella you? 'Cause you people despisa poor Indian boy. What for you despisa poor Indian boy! 'Cause him skin be dark: heart same color for all dat. Me lika you very much, Massa Harry. 'Cause you beat big fellar when him kicka me and pincha me: never forget dat. Me now in my own country. Me poor Indian boy no longer. Me very good friend to you. My fader him king of Guiana; my brudder tella me he come dis way with great company." Sure enough a multitude of horsemen were now observed in the distance making toward them.

"Bravo, Snowball!" exclaimed Harry Daring in great delight with what he had heard. "So thou art a prince, eh? I' faith! that be droll enough too. But I don't like thee a bit the worse for't; and even now, if I saw any using of thee despisingly I would cudgel them well, I promise thee."

It was not more than half an hour after this that Pomarra had presented Harry Daring to his father, in the midst of a splendid retinue of caciques and other of his nobles who had come out a hunting; and in consequence of what the young prince said, Harry was made much of by all. He did also, in his own

language, speak favorably of their female companion, whom the king regarded with singular curiousness, and ordered to be well cared for

CHAPTER XXVII.

Yet unspoiled
Guiana, whose great city Geryon's sons
Call El Dorado. MILTON.

Guiana, whose rich feet are mines of gold,
Whose forehead knocks against the roof of stars,
Stands on her tiptoes at fair England looking,
Kissing her hand, bowing her mighty breast,
And every sign of all submission making."
CHAPMAN.

While with a joyous smile she turns away
The face, that map, that deep impression bears
Of hard misfortune carved in with tears.
SHAKSPEARE.

MASTER FRANCIS was hurried away from the council chamber into a close prison, where he was left to solitariness, and his own thoughts. For some time he could do nothing but reflect upon the monstrousness with which Padre Bartolomé had behaved to him. He could scarce believe in such thorough villany. It seemed to him so utterly unnatural that one man should do such a thing to another who never did him an injury. Whilst he was in this mood there came to him the chief priest, who had acted as the interpreter before the king, and he intimated that he was sent to prepare the prisoner for his death. Now the priest was a famous punchy little old fellow, with a head like unto a ball of black worsted—nose had he of such a smallness that the least that be said of it must the best describe it; but what he lacked in nose he made up in mouth, the lips whereof looked as though they were two masses of black pudding squeezed one upon the other. He was dressed in a white tunic, that made the very blackness of his skin all the more apparent, and he looked upon Master Francis with a sort of dignified pitifulness, which at any other time the other could not but have laughed at.

"Child, thou art to die!" said he, in Spanish. "But our illustrious monarch, out of the absolute bountifulness of his nature, hath adjudged thee a death that all might envy. Thou wilt have the honor of being made a sacrifice of to the great god Singarydunkyhunkyhoonka."

Master Francis had so little opinion of the honor intended him, and such small respect for the powerful deity just named, as most cordially to wish Singarydunkyhunkyhoonka at a place which shall be nameless.

"Child, thou art to die!" repeated the old fellow in a like pathetic tone and manner. "But our most pious monarch, out of the exceeding religiousness of his disposition, doth wish thee, before the devouring flame consumeth thy body to a cinder, to give up the god of the Christians, who, it be out of all manner of doubt hath let thee into this misadventure, and acknowledge the omnipotence of Singarydunkyhunkyhoonka, who, though he hath but one eye, seeth all our wants with it, and though he hath four-and-twenty pairs of hands, hath all of them full of good things he be continually a giving to they who worship him."

"It is my intention to die in the religion in the which I was educated," replied Master Francis.

"Oh, blind of heart!" exclaimed the priest, looking all sorts of horror and consternation. "Oh, stubborn and stiff-necked! Prepare for the fire that shall consume thee. Thou art a base wretch. Thou art unworthy to die so honorable a death. I would have thee hanged like a dog." At the saying of this away started the chief priest, pursing up his pudding lips with a look of infinite forbiddingness.

Master Francis was again left alone, and remained so for some few hours. His reflections, it may well be believed, were not of the most pleasing character. To be burnt alive was a prospect that few could contemplate without dread, but to his susceptible mind it appeared with the very terriblest features that could be imagined. Despite of his great fearfulness, his thought were soon a wandering to other subjects. He thought how great a consolation it would be at such a time could he think commendably of Joanna. So difficult is it for a sensitive mind that hath for any considerable period concentrated its thoughts upon one object with the deepest and sincerest affectionateness to regard it despisingly when that object has proved itself to be of a despicable nature. An ingenuous disposition, such as was Master Francis, hath ever such confidence in the appearance of truth, that however shocked he may be at first when he findeth out the falsehood, there ever remaineth some little doubt that things be so bad as they seem, or some strong inclination that they should be of a better sort. He could not help but marvel that she had shown such

signs of excellence as had made him worship her as one of so blessed a condition her peer was not to be met with in the whole world; but such is it ever. Many a one mistaketh gilding for gold—and doth wonder famously when he findeth that all be mere brass, but the show of something sterling that was put on it.

The result of his reflections was, as he had already forgiven her the wrong she had done him, he felt he could not die in any comfort of heart if he continued to entertain against her such feelings as he had so much experience of: and then did he commence remembering of the many wonderful kindnesses she had done him, till all thought of her badness went straightway out of his mind. In this mood he remained for the whole of the day. Food was brought him of a mean sort, but he cared not for it. He paced the narrow chamber in which he was confined, or sat himself down on a bench that was fixed there, passing of his time, as I have said, with occasional thinking of such dear friends as was evident he should never see again. So went the day and the next something after the same sort. He could not help upon an occasion marvelling at the strangeness of what was to come to pass—to wit, that instead of his entering of the right famous El Dorado, in which he now was, as one of its conquerors, he should be executed in it as a criminal.

On the third day the old priest paid him another visit, in the which he stated that the Padre Bartolomé, no watch having been put upon him, had made his escape, and nothing was known of where he had taken himself: whereof the consequence was, Master Francis was ordered to prepare himself for immediate death, it being feared that he might give them the slip also. The old fellow again essayed to make his prisoner a convert unto the faith of Singarydunkyhunkyhoonka, the beneficent deity with one eye and four-and-twenty pairs of hands, but he got no more success of it than at first, and this did put him in a more monstrous passion than ever. Presently there came certain other Indians, who appeared to be officers of justice, and they gave him to understand he was to go with them. With them he accordingly went. Upon passing out of his prison into the open air, he found himself in the midst of a vast multitude, who received him with great outcries, yet were there many amongst them who pitied him the death he was to die because of his youth and comeliness. Many a kind word was said of him as he passed along, though he knew it not. All that he knew was that he was in the midst of some vast procession passing along the thoroughfares of a great city. He could hear a monstrous clanging of instruments, and the wild discordant singing of a multitude of priests who were around him; long files of soldiers, armed with prodigious spears, encompassed him on either side, and at his elbow was the old priest opening and shutting of his ugly mouth with wonderful rapidity in praise of his omnipotent deity. Nevertheless, Master Francis heeded him not at all—and soon ceased to pay any great attention to what was going on around. He walked along with an erect carriage, and a heart disturbed but little at the contemplation of what he was to endure, for his mind was fixed upon endeavoring so to bear himself in so dreadful a strait as might command the commendation of his true friends, Sir Walter Raleigh, Master Shakspeare, and Harry Daring, were they present. On he went, with nothing that could distinguish him from what he was at other times, save a countenance somewhat more pallid than usual. The crowd increased as he proceeded, and every part of the neighboring houses and temples was crowded with spectators, anxious to have sight of what they believed to be the most cruel and crafty of all the Spaniards. Many came with revengeful feelings, who felt quite pitifully inclined toward him when they noticed his mild and melancholy aspect; but others, of a worse sort, in their language taunted him all the way he went. At last he arrived at an open space in the city, where there was a magnificent statue in gold of a gigantic size, humanly shaped, saving that it had but one eye, whilst of hands it had four-and-twenty pairs, each holding some desirable thing, as if for its worshipper. Before it was ever so much wood piled up, at the sight of which Master Francis did give a shudder, but as quickly as he might he shook off that fearfulness, and praying inwardly with fervor, he still advanced. A great crash of the instruments was made when the procession came in sight of the idol, and the shouting of the people at the same instant was so tremendous, that scarce ever was the like heard. Some did kneel down, and some threw themselves prostrate; and the priests bawled out their discordant chorus at the very top of their voices. Platforms had

been erected round about the place, on which vast companies had congregated themselves, to have a view of the execution of so notable a criminal, and all that was the greatest in so grand a city as Manoa had been drawn together about that spot.

When Master Francis came close upon the wood which was to burn him, he had to ascend a flight of steps to bring himself to the top of the pile, and as soon as he there appeared, there was presently a vast cry of the multitude. Two men ascended with him, and bound him: and then also came the old priest, mumbling away, as fast as he could, the praises of the deity he worshipped, in expectation of making a proselyte of the youth; but the latter paid him no sort of attention; and such behavior did wondrously enrage the old idolater, who thundered all manner of imprecations upon him for his exceeding stubbornness. Master Francis took no heed of this, for he was so intent upon his own devotions that he saw nothing, and heard nothing—he remembered not where he was—he knew not wherefore he was in that place. The priest descended from the pyre, and took a torch into his hand. Upon this, all the priests began a singing louder than ever; and the multitude fell down upon their knees before the great idol, and the instrumen·s struck up a clang that would have set anybody's teeth on edge. The chief priest then put fire to the wood, which began to blaze presently; but as he was a doing it, there was a monstrous bustling behind him. The multitude were stirred in one particular part, and some voices kept crying out very lustily. All strained their eyes to see; but few could make out what it all meant.

"Hullo, old pudding chaps, get out of this!" exclaimed Harry Daring, suddenly forcing his way to the pyre in a monstrous eagerness, and giving the priest such a shove that it sent him a staggering along till he fell upon his back, distending of his ugly mou.h at so rude a salutation, and staring till his eyes seemed ready to start out of his head. At the sight of such an affront offered to their chief priest, the whole multitude seemed moved to a marvellous indignation, and the soldiers were rushing forward to take the offender prisoner. He spying where Master Francis was, cried out, "By Gog and Magog, he must be nigh burning to death!" then began kicking aside the burning wood, and clambering up the steps. In a minute, drawing of his hanger, he had cut the cords that bound his friend, and, with one arm supporting him by holding of him tightly round the waist, with the other he menaced, with his hanger, the soldiers, priests, and others of the Indians, who were hastening toward the spot, determined that their beloved idol should not be cheated of his sacrifice.

"Come on, ye worsted knaves, and I'll stick ye like so many black beetles on a skewer!" exclaimed Harry, as despite of the numbers against him, he was seeking to force a passage from the blazing pyre. It seemed as if he was like to fare badly; for he was so surrounded by enemies that it did not appear as if he could cut his way through them; and the fire was flaming around him so famously that it looked as if he would be burnt to a cinder ere he should have time to get Master Francis away. In the midst of it, however, there was suddenly a shouting of the people greater than before; and presently the king of Guiana, accompanied by his two sons, and a splendid retinue of caciques, all on horseback, and attended by a numerous guard of soldiers, made their appearance. Harry Daring and the royal party had set out from the palace at the same time, but his impatience to rescue his friend was so great he soon outstripped them, and pressed through the crowd, and conducted himself as hath been described.

It be scarce necessary to add that the omnipotent Singarydunkyhunkyhoonka, with one eye and four-and-twenty pairs of hands, was deprived of his destined victim; whereof, at first, the Indians showed wonderful discontent, especially those of the more religious sort. But it having been made known to them that this cruel Spaniard who had done their people so much wrong, was no Spaniard at all, but one of a nation who was a determined enemy to the whole Spanish race;—that amongst them the youngest son of the king, who had disappeared unaccountably the year before, had been residing, they having taken him away, and now restored him to his family, their disappointment was turned into gratification; and on their return with the king's party to the palace, they greeted Master Francis and Harry Daring with such piercing cries of commendation, as they could hardly have given had they been the very chiefest and most prized of their countrymen. The former rode between his friend and the young prince Pomarra, and Harry, as he went along, described to the other how he and "Snowball"—

for he would call him by no other name —got away from Sir Walter Raleigh and the companies, and under the guidance of an Indian woman who had obtained knowledge of the direction in which Master Francis had been carried off, started in pursuit of him; and how Snowball met with his brother in one he was about to give battle to; and how the latter turned out to be no other than a son of the very king who had got Master Francis close prisoner; and how, finding the execution about to take place, Snowball did disabuse his father's mind of the monstrous lies which that wretched caitiff Padre Bartolomé had told; and how, by telling the king that Master Francis was of a great nation who were enemies unto the Spaniards, and had come on purpose, with others, to drive the Spaniards out of the Indian territory, he immediately gave orders to stop the sacrifice, and did himself proceed to the place, with all his principal nobles, on purpose to see his commands properly executed.

"But what hath become of your female companion?" inquired Master Francis. "Is she one of this goodly company?"

"Snowball knoweth more about her than I do," replied Harry; "for she not being able to speak honest English, I could have no speech with her, which I took in rather hard case, I promise you, for seeing of the interest she showed in you, I was ever a wanting to discourse to her of your excellent parts, that she might affect you as much as I did; but Snowball, as it seemed to me, being of her tongue, she talked only with him, and he, therefore, be the properest person to tell you all about her." Here Harry Daring turned to the young prince and said, "Tell Master Francis what you know of that female Snowball who travelled with us to this place."

"I tella you but litule," said Prince Pomarra. "What for I tella you but little? 'Cause what she tella me, she bid me no say again. She very much love you, Massa Francis."

"Love me!" exclaimed the other, with unaffected astonishment. "How can that be possible? I have not had speech of any of the Indian women, and have scarce been seen of one."

"She very much love you for all dat," replied the young prince. "She travel all de way—sometimes get little victual —sometimes get little sleep. Wild beast come—she no care. What for she no care? 'Cause she love you very much."

"By God and Magog, if I didn't think she did affect you in some measure," cried Harry Daring; "for it stands to reason no pretty wench would venture herself so far in strange company, and amid perils few women would like to even look on, in search of the best man that ever wore a head, had she not a monstrous liking for him. But it showeth her good sense marvellously, to cast her eye where she did; for she knoweth right well she might look amongst the whole nation of Snowballs in despair of finding any one like unto Master Francis."

"Well, let it be as it may, I can not help but be grateful," observed Master Francis. "Where is she? Where shall I see her?"

"She no see you," replied the prince; "she come all dis way to save you; but now you safe, she love you no more, and no see you at all."

"Hang me if that be not the strangest way of loving I ever heard of," exclaimed Harry Daring. "What! not see him? Not see Master Francis after she hath suffered so much to come but anigh him? She meaneth nothing of the sort, I'll be bound for't."

"At least it be exceeding strange of her," remarked Master Francis. "I know not what to make on't; but I should like infinitely to see her, to say how much I feel myself beholden to her for the good offices she hath done me."

"You no see her for all dat," replied the young prince. At this Master Francis marvelled greatly; but as they now had arrived at the palace, all thought of the subject was for a time put out of his head. A short time after he had alighted, he and Harry Daring had audience of the king, who sat surrounded by the chiefest of his nobles, and having his two sons on each side of him, all dressed with extraordinary magnificence. Pomarra acted as interpreter. The business began by the king expressing of his regret that any of so great a nation as the English, of whom he had heard from his son such accounts as made him anxious to be in friendly relation with them, should have received any treatment they liked not of any of his subjects; but for what Master Francis had suffered, none were to blame but the Jesuit by whose testimony the former had been condemned, as the very cruelest of all the Spaniards, of whom his people throughout Guiana had endured such torture and tyranny as was never before heard of in those parts. He begged that, as it was a mistake, Master

Francis would treat if as such, and allow him, in such way as he thought fit, to make him amends.

Then Master Francis, though he was a little out of countenance at first, at speaking before so many, spoke up famously, declaring the great design of Sir Walter Raleigh in favor of the Indians to abolish the oppressions of the Spaniards over them, and that he had come out of his own country with a fine expedition of many ships and a great force of men, with the sanction of his illustrious sovereign, to do what services he could to the natives of Guiana, and to all the Indians on that part of the continent; that he had already driven the Spaniards out of Trinidad, and done good service to the Indians there; and if he had not returned, by this time was venturing in his boats along the Orinoco, seeking for that right famous city, called of the Spaniards El Dorado. Master Francis then described how he had been entrapped by Padre Bartolomé and his companions, and carried off; and how the Indians had set upon the Spaniards and killed them all save the Jesuit, and what had since taken place. With regard to himself, he requested only that such conveniences might be allowed him, as would enable him to rejoin Sir Walter Raleigh as speedily as was possible; but of other sort of favor wanted he none.

At this the whole court was moved to a sudden admiration, as might be noticed by their looks, and one of the king's chiefest counsellors said, that intelligence had been received that many boats full of white men were now returning toward the sea, after having visited divers towns and villages, and trafficked with the natives, and behaved unto them with exceeding friendliness. After him the king spoke again, and said that an escort should be got ready without delay, for the purpose of attending the two young Englishmen, with a proper show of respect, to such place as they were like to meet Sir Walter Raleigh; but that he could in no way allow them to be quit of him without exhibiting some mark of his esteem for their country, and admiration of themselves. He then turned to Harry Daring, and expressed himself with wonderful commendation of his conduct toward his son, whereof he had been made acquainted by Pomarra; and said, that if he would stay in Guiana, and enter into his service, he would raise him to rank with the highest of the caciques, and when he came to be a man, give him his own daughter in marriage.

"What! leave my true friend, Master Francis!" exclaimed Harry, as soon as what had been said had been interpreted to him. "Nay, that will I never do. It be the part of the most villanous knave that lives, to forsake his friend for his own profit; and I be none such, I promise you. By Gog and Magog, I should be a right scurvy fellow, if, after venturing myself so far into foreign parts for the love of him, merely because that I could better my fortune by staying here, I should leave him to find his way back as he best might."

"Think not of me, Harry: I shall be well cared for, depend on't," observed Master Francis, kindly to him. "If that your inclination lead you to stay here, I doubt not at all you will quickly arrive at that greatness your courageous humor deserveth. I should be loath to stand in the way of your advancement at so promising a time. Consider of what the king hath told you, and do what is most pleasing to you."

"I will never consider of it," cried Harry determinedly, "if the considering of it lead to the parting of me from you. What dost think I could marry one of these, and mayhap in time to come have ever so many little Snowballs round about me, and I get not a sight of you the whilst? I say again, if it be to my profit ever so, I will have none of it. Should it please you to stay here, I doubt not of your arriving at such eminence as you be most fit for; and there be nothing I should like so much as being under your command. It be not the part of a faithful esquire to think of being a greater man than the knight he serveth. I would as lief cut off my hand as think of such a thing. Remain here, I pray you, if you would have me stay in these outlandish parts."

"That can not be, Harry," replied Master Francis. "My duty to Sir Walter Raleigh requireth me to hasten to him with all despatch."

"And my duty to you requireth I should be wherever you are," said Harry Daring; then addressing himself unto the king who, with all his court, were marvelling at what the two were talking of, he added, "an it please your mightiness, I can in no way be brought to live in these parts, though I think it be exceeding kind of you to make me so fair an offer; but Snowball here will tell you that Master Francis is my true friend, than whom

there liveth not on this earth one of a better nature, and I should be prouder in being his humble follower, whether he meet with good or ill hap in the world, than I should feel in being king of all this goodly country. If it please you, my lord, what I have done in the way of friendship to Snowball here, whilst we were in the Lion's Whelp, I would have done to any other whom I saw despisingly used, and I never cared to be thanked for it; but if that you must needs be generous, though I would have naught for myself, I should be right glad to see you shower your gifts upon my true friend, Master Francis, who be one of so noble a sort, nothing can be too good for him you can enrich him with."

"Harry, Harry, you must not say such fine things of me!" exclaimed the other.

"By Gog and Magog, if there be any here that will gainsay it, I would as lief give them a cut over the pate as look at them," replied Harry with a sincere earnestness. This being interpreted to the king and his court, they did marvel exceedingly at the friendliness of the one for the other, and the king spoke much in praise of them both, and not being able to prevail on either to stay, he dismissed them with great store of presents sufficient to enrich them for life.

They stayed only a day or two whilst preparations were made for their departure, the time whereof they passed in seeing whatever was most notable in El Dorado, which they found to exceed all that had been said of it in splendor and costliness. Master Francis essayed many times to have speech with the Indian woman, who had ventured herself so far for his rescue; for not only was he curious to see her, but could not help being grateful to her for doing him such great kindness. Yet though he oft inquired where she might be met with, he never could get sight of her, which put him into a strange sort of wondering; he knew not what it could mean. At last they started with a famous cavalcade, all having horses of the choicest breed, curiously caparisoned, save those of meaner sort who formed the guard, the king himself being of the company some portion of the way, and then parting with the two young Englishmen with such exceeding courteousness that a looker-on might have supposed they were persons of quality and power above all men, instead of being, as they were, of no quality or influence whatsoever.

Prince Pomarra had the command of the escort after the king had departed; and a famous sight it was to see that goodly company ascending and descending the mountains, or forcing their way through the forests, and galloping along the valleys to the number of several hundreds, each with a long spear in his hand, a bow slung across his shoulder, and a quiver of arrows at his back, and the prince at their head between Master Francis and Harry Daring, on the very wild horse he had caught in the plain; now so covered over with costly trappings and ornaments of gold, and so quietly behaving of himself, as scarce to be recognised for what he was; nor seemed the rider to bear any likeness unto the despised Indian boy that was aboard of the Lion's Whelp; for he was robed as became his station, very gorgeous with gold and jewels, and a dainty plume of feathers of the very brightest colors waved upon his head. His spear he held in his hand like unto the others, and like unto them did he carry his bow and his arrows. A handsomer figure could scarce be seen of an Indian youth; and one who bore himself more gallantly it would be the very difficultest thing possible to meet with anywhere.

Of what befell these as they journeyed it might seem tedious to relate, seeing that nothing very striking occurred, save only in one thing. Master Francis, once on a time, not many days after they had set out, noticed to his exceeding surprise, that a female was of their company. She was not dressed at all like unto the Indian woman who had led Harry Daring and the young prince to his rescue; for the habiliments of this female were of the richest materials, as if she were of the highest rank amongst them, whilst the other was attired as one of the very humblest sort. Her face was hid in a muffler as had been the other's; and in the hasty glance he had of it, for he came on her suddenly as she was riding along talking to Pomarra, he could only notice her eyes, which she had left uncovered, but turned from him the instant he appeared. On his coming up both seemed wondrous confused; and he thinking that it was a love affair betwixt them, which they wished should be secret, he put some trifling question to the young prince, and galloped off to the head of the escort, fancying that he should make but indifferent company if he remained.

More than once as they proceeded on their journey, upon a sudden turning of his gaze in that direction, he observed

her eyes fixed upon him with singular earnestness, which seemed strange, seeing that he had never spoke and scarce looked at her; but believing from seeing of Prince Pomarra frequently at her side, and noting that she talked to no other, that his first idea of them was true, he thought only she regarded him with such curiousness as might be natural to one of her nation at the sight of a white man, and took no further heed of her looks. It so happened that Harry Daring saw her, and would have it at first it was the same he had travelled with; but finding that she noticed him not at all, and observing how differently she was dressed, he came to the opinion that it was another, and said as much to Master Francis when they spoke on the subject. They were now nigh unto the end of their journey, for as they passed along they had speech with sundry Indians, from whom they got intelligence that the white men were proceeding down to the sea, and were but a few miles in advance of them; and this put Harry Daring and Master Francis in high spirits. They talked to one another of how delighted they should be to see again Sir Walter and the rest.

"Methinks he will be famously wrath with me for giving him the slip," observed Harry.

"That he can never be when he knoweth, as he shall, all that thou hast done to bring me back to him," replied Master Francis.

"Let it be as it may I care not so that I am with thee," added the other. "But art not glad we be returning to England?"

"The idea of it pleaseth me I must own," answered his companion.

"What exquisite fine fun I shall have when I get there!" said Harry Daring. "Methinks old Lather would be puzzled to know me I be so altered. I wonder whether he goeth on with his Latin as of old? Doubtless he would be in a thundering humor at the sight of me, I did play him so famous a trick before I left. Wouldn't big Jack o' the Turnstile and the rest of them marvel could they see me now, riding on a fine horse, and decked out in such famous trim as the king gave unto us! When I get me to Eastcheap I shall not fail to call on neighbor Sarsnet, to inquire of him and of old Dame Margery what hath become of that slippery jade Joanna."

"For what object?" inquired Master Francis.

"I should like monstrously to know the rights on't," replied the other. "I told thee she was no good long before she proved herself such, for she could not be otherwise, using thee as she did. But let her go hang!—thou wilt find her betters anywhere. For mine own part, I have no patience with a wench who showeth such extreme cunning over such thorough baseness."

"It be a thousand pities she hath behaved herself so ill," observed his companion, with great seriousness of manner. "I can love her no more; but I have heartily forgiven her the wrong she hath done me, and sincerely hope that she may be as happy as her heart can desire."

Master Francis had scarce said these words when he turned round suddenly upon hearing of two or three hysterical sounds at his elbow. They came from the Indian woman, who he knew had for some time been riding at his side. She seemed about to fall from her horse, and would have done so had he not leaned over and caught her in his arms. The horses were stopped on the instant, and that of Master Francis being brought as close as was possible unto hers, he was enabled to hold her in a more convenient position, having her head resting upon his shoulder. He sent some of the guard forward to the young prince, who was far in advance of them, to give him notice of what had taken place; but believing her to be in a swoon as she seemed, and that the best thing that could be done for her was to let her have as much air as could be got, he presently fell to undoing of her muffler, which was tied about her face. An exclamation of surprise and wonder burst from the lips of Master Francis and Harry Daring at one and the same moment. It was the face of no Indian woman that they gazed upon. It was the mercer's daughter of Eastcheap!

CHAPTER XXVIII.

Each scene of many colored life he drew,
Exhausted worlds and then imagined new.
JOHNSON.

——Whom she lifted up into a throne
Of high renown. SACKVILLE.

It is the mind that maketh good or ill,
That makes a wretch, or happy, rich, or poor,
For some that have abundance at their will
Have not enough but want in greatest store,
Another that hath little asks for more,
But in that little is both rich and wise.
SPENSER.

Divine Philosophy!
Not harsh and crabbed as dull fools believe,
But musical as is Apollo's lute.
SHAKSPEARE.

Now must I make such amends to the courteous reader for keeping him away so long from the chiefest person in this my story as may hold him in good humor until he cometh to the end of the narration, for doubtless some may think Master Shakspeare hath not been well used of me, inasmuch as so much less hath lately been said of him than of others, but it be beyond all manner of contradiction that aught of great goodness should be used sparingly, else shall it be straight lessened in value. Things that lack rareness be seldom esteemed by any man; and Master Shakspeare being possessed of excellence of so rare a sort, methinks my thrusting of him into these pages less oft than those of less note shall make him all the more liked of such who know how to prize such extreme worthiness. Albeit, though of this conceit, yet here must I say this much—to wit, Master Shakspeare did bring out his play called "The Merry Wives of Windsor," that was so much approved of by Queen Elizabeth and all her court upon its reading, at which time her majesty with a fine company of courtiers did honor the playhouse with her presence, and seemed to relish the acting of it marvellously and it met with wonderful success, as its singular merit well deserved. To mark the sense the queen's majesty had of him, his vast genius, and great honesty of heart, the next day she sent him a purse of money with a commendable message. After this he sat to the writing of other plays, whereof many were relished of the town in a like manner, and these, together with what he derived from his playing, brought him in such gains, as gave him no fear of the future, and enabled him to send loving tokens to his relations very frequently, and to invite his brother Edmund from Stratford to become a player with him in London.

His reputation continuing so to increase, he was much sought after by many noblemen and persons of worship, who took huge delight in his society for the delicacy of his wit and the honorableness of his behavior. He was held in such request of them, that no name was so oft or famously spoken of; and amongst the gay gallants of the time, not to have been in company with Master Shakspeare argued a want of distinction that was considered of all an infinite disparagement. Of those who esteemed him most was there none so true a friend as my Lord of Southampton, for he seemed not only never to tire in doing him good service, but the more he did for him in the way of friendliness, the more appeared he inclined to do. Indeed, he was such a patron as poet hath been seldom blessed with, but this also may be said, he met with such a poet as patron never had. About this time Master Shakspeare took also to the writing of poems, whereof one was of the subject of Venus and Adonis, and the other the Rape of Lucrece, and both were very movingly writ, and full of right delicate fancies. They were dedicated by him unto his excellent good friend and patron, in token of what respect he held him in, and in grateful remembrance of my lord's manifold good offices.

It so fell out that Master Shakspeare, though he had some share in the playhouse at the Blackfriars before this, as well as that of the Globe at the Bankside, had been exceeding anxious to have greater share in them; yet lacked he the means to do it with, for it required no small sum. He had saved up but little, and could scarce expect, saved he ever so, to get for some years to come as much as he needed. This told he to none, for he was not of a nature to solicit a favor, though few writers of his time stood much upon ceremony in that respect. His friend Master Burbage knew of it only, and it was like enough he should have more knowledge of his affairs than any other, because of their being such constant associates, sharers of the same property, and fellow-players; and from its being equally the desire of one as of the other that Master Shakspeare should have a greater interest in the playhouse than what he had. For such purpose the latter was eager to increase his gains as fast as he might that he should the sooner realize his wish, therefore brought he out as many plays as he could, together with the poems that have already been mentioned.

About this time Master Shakspeare was in a large room in the playhouse at the Blackfriars, that served as a wardrobe. It had shelves and presses in it as many as it could hold, and pins against the wainscot, on which were placed a wonderful variety of different dresses, such as might be worn of the players in their different plays. There were the robes of the Ottomite and the Venetian, the swarthy Moor and the gay Italian, the

ancient Greek and Roman, and others of modern date, as well foreign as English, together with divers suits of armor, weapons of sundry sorts, hats, caps, cloaks, doublets, jerkins, and boots, seemingly out of all number. The room was so crowded with such motley gear that there was scarce space for one to sit; yet had Master Shakspeare found himself a seat, he being in the habit of using this chamber as a dressing-room; and there sat he in a deep arm-chair, resting of himself, as if after some labor he had undergone, or considering of some matter he was intent upon. He was dressed in what appeared to be a complete suit of armor, having his vizor up, and what could be seen of his face looked exceeding pale and ghostlike, but doubtless that was from some white stuff he had put on to make it so. He was leaning back in his seat, with his legs stretched out before him, resting of his elbow upon an old table, upon which there was seen a rapier and a hat, some papers, with pen and ink, a silver goblet with a flask of wine at the side of it, and two or three books. There was a log blazing on the fire-dogs nearly opposite to him, which cast a cheerful light over the room.

Whilst he was sitting as he was, there was ever and anon heard a voice shouting out famously, which beyond all manner of doubt could belong to none other than Gib the call-boy; and at other times there was heard a noise like unto a great clapping of hands. Once the latter sounds were of so great a loudness, it roused Master Shakspeare from his thoughtfulness, and he jumped up of a sudden with a smile upon his face, that showed he found some satisfaction in them. Then he took off his helmet, and such portion of his armor as encased the upper part of his body and arms; and going to an ewer and basin that stood in a corner, fell to washing of his face, humming of a merry tune all the while, which was only interrupted by the splashing of his mouth with the water. As he was finishing of his lavation he broke out into the following pleasant song:—

"Go, happy youth, and loudly swear
That with thy Love none can compare;
And vow to own her angel hand
Will make thee proudest of the land.
Thou hast her hand. 'Though that be true,
I asked not for a cudgel too;
And though my own *my angel* be,
She now doth *play the devil* with me.'

'Alack! Alack! and well-a-day!'
I heard a hapless husband say,
'Bachelors all be not too bold,
'Tis better go hang than marry a scold.'

"Go, happy youth, and swear once more,
Thy Love all Loves be far before.
'Troth I another wife have got,
Who never rateth me one jot'
A month passed by—the honey-moon—
The doting husband changed his tune;
'O hapless wight! my wife,' cried he,
'Loves others quite as well as me!'

'Alack! Alack! and well-a-day!'
I heard a hapless husband say,
'Bachelors all be not betrayed,
'Tis better go hang than marry a jade.'

"Go, happy youth, and swear at last
That all thy travail now is passed.
'I'faith 'tis true. My wooing thrives—
I've found the very best of wives.'
Another month went by—again
I heard the horn mad fool complain.
She doth not scold—she doth not roam—
But drinketh me out of house and home.'

'Alack! Alack! and well-a-day!'
I heard a happy widower say;—
'Bachelors all—seek ye no thrall,
'Tis better go hang than marry at all.'"

This sung he with such a happy carelessness, it was plain he had not much to fret him; but scarce had he finished it when he heard some one whom he knew on the instant, coming toward the door, whistling of the tune of "Green Sleeves." Not being in a state to be seen of any, for that he was but half-dressed, he presently hied to the door and bolted it inside.

"Ope the door, Will!" cried Master Burbage from without, knocking at it briskly. "Ope the door, I prythee."

"Tarry awhile, Dick," replied Master Shakspeare, "I can not let thee in for some minutes."

"Nay, why should I tarry?" inquired the other, "did I not hear thee singing like a very swan? Haste and ope the door, for I must have speech with thee."

"Tarry awhile, Dick, I tell thee again," said his companion with more emphasis than at first. "I can let thee in now on no account."

"Oh thou villain!" exclaimed he on the outside in his customary jocular manner. "I see through thy tricks now. Thou art not the bird to be ever a singing to thyself. Thou hast got some pretty wench with thee—a murrain on thee for thy slyness."

"Thou art out in thy reckoning this time, good Dick, depend on't," observed Master Shakspeare laughingly.

"By this hand I do not believe thee," cried Master Burbage. "It be plain from thy singing so like unto a swan, and thy not opening the door to me, that thou art playing at Jupiter and Leda after thine own fashion. Oh, I be so monstrously shocked! I be afraid my innocency will so suffer by keeping of thy villanous company, I shall soon get me a

bad character. Dost not know that evil communications corrupt good morals, and be hanged to thee?"

"*Thy* good morals, Dick!" exclaimed the other in the like bantering way. "Under what bushel hast thou hid so goodly a rushlight? Thy good morals! Diogenes with his lanthorn might have met with an honest man, but if he spied thy good morals searched he ever so close, he must needs be blest with marvellous fine eyesight."

"Out on thee for a reprobate!" cried his companion. "Thou dost slander the modestest nature that breathes."

"Then alack for modesty!" replied Master Shakspeare. "But I tell thee what it is, Dick—I am stripped to the buff, therefore be as patient as thou canst for a minute or so."

"I do hugely suspect thee," said Master Burbage. "Thou art not the first I have met in a buff jerkin, therefore is there no occasion to make that a hinderance." Notwithstanding of what he said, his friend opened not the door till he was ready.

"I'faith thou lookest marvellous well considering that thou hast just 'given up the ghost,'" observed Master Burbage upon his entering. "Be thy intent wicked or charitable, oh, representative of the majesty of buried Denmark! But I will see with mine own eyes whether thou hast not been cozening of me." Upon this, whilst Master Shakspeare could not but laugh, the other began to look about him with a monstrous earnestness, rummaging of every place, spying into the drawers and presses, and under the tables and chairs.

"Mayhap thou hast conjured her into the bottle," observed he very seriously, as he first took a look into the flask, and then poured out some of the wine into the goblet. "Well, if she be as good as this," continued he, upon drinking off the liquor, "then is she the very excellentest woman I ever came anigh. I'faith, she can not help being a wench after mine own heart. I drink to her better acquaintance." And thereupon he drunk off another draught of the wine.

"But how hath Hamlet gone off today?" inquired Master Shakspeare, as soon as he could put on him a serious face.

"Naught could go better," replied his companion. "I was in front best part of the time, and famously did I notice thy admirable performance; I tell thee truly, Will, thou art the only ghost I would care to look on a second time."

"I believe thee there, Dick," said the other with a laugh. "Nay, 'tis probable enough thou wouldst much rather turn thy back on a ghost than look on it at all.

"I will acknowledge to thee, I like not holding acquaintance with any," said Master Burbage.

"And yet they be not unsocial," observed Master Shakspeare with as much gravity as he could assume. "For I doubt not at all, that not only on its first appearance would one shake thy hand, but shake thy body for thee into the bargain."

"By this light, that be not so bad!" exclaimed his companion, laughing heartily. "But methinks thy wit be like unto a steel breastplate—the brighter it becometh the oftener it be used."

"And *that* be none so bad," replied his friend. "But how didst like the playing of Taylor?"

"He playeth the character of Hamlet so well, that, as far as my judgment goeth, none living can come up with him," said the other.

"I do assure thee, I took huge pains in the teaching of him," observed Master Shakspeare, as he was fastening his doublet.

"That is manifest enough," answered Master Burbage. "And he hath profited well. It was my good hap to be in a room with my Lord of Southampton whilst noticing of the play, and he was quite rapt in it as it were, and greatly commended Master Taylor. But of thy playing of the ghost he seemed to like most of all, for he said there was so awful a fearfulness in thy doing of it, 'twas quite moving to look on; which methinks is nothing more than the truth. We then fell to discoursing of thy many singular excellences, and I do assure thee he spoke right eloquently in thy praise. He mentioned the exceeding fine pleasure he had lately derived from the perusing of thy most sweet poems, which thou hast properly dedicated to him, for of all true friends I do believe him to be the truest,—and spoke of his great desire to do thee such service as might be most lasting. He asked of me concerning of thy circumstances, and pressed much to know whether thou didst lack anything he could obtain for thee. Upon this request of his, I presently told him how anxious wert thou to purchase a greater share in the playhouse than what thou hast already."

"Thou shouldst not have told him

that, Dick," said Master Shakspeare, with some earnestness.

"And why not, Will?" inquired Master Burbage.

"In truth, I like not seeming to want aught of any," replied the other.

"Seeming to want fiddlestick," exclaimed his companion. "Thou art too scrupulous by far. Dost think I would stand upon my punctilios with one inclined to do me a kindness? I be no such a wittol, I promise thee. But to proceed with my narration. My lord did inquire very particularly what sum was required—the value of the property—the advantages to be gained by a purchase of such a share of it, and the like sensible questions; to all of which, thou mayest depend on it, I gave right sensible answers."

"I would thou hadst never spoke on the matter," observed Master Shakspeare, very seriously.

"Out on thee for an ungrateful varlet!" cried Master Burbage. "Well, after this, my lord left me, courteously bidding of me good day, and I, as soon as I might, posted to thee, to let thee know how good a friend thou hast in him; for I be quite certain, though he gave me no hint of a promise that he hath most liberal intentions toward thee."

"I have seen few of so generous a nature," said the other. "Yet can I never bring my mind to take advantage of it, nevertheless"——

"Here cometh Gib's heavy foot—mayhap he hath a message for one or other of us," observed his companion, interrupting him, and sure enough a footstep was heard of the very clumsiest sort approaching the door—then there came a knock at it, and admittance being granted, certes Gib, the call-boy, made his appearance, looking in no way altered from what he was when the courteous reader had sight of him last, being just as bandy in the legs, as monstrous in the mouth, as squinting in the eyes, as carroty in the hair, as awkward in his manner, and as clumsy in his shape as ever.

"Here be a letter for Master Shakspeare," said he, and straightway Master Shakspeare took it from his hand.

"Well, Chanticleer!" exclaimed Master Burbage, hitting of the boy a slap on the back which nearly sent him off his legs. "Thou didst play thy part famously."

"Methinks, for the playing of the cock in Hamlet, there be few so apt," replied the call-boy, looking exceeding dignified.

"Thou art too modest by half," said Master Burbage with a wondrous gravity. "Thou art sure to be 'cock of the walk' wherever thou goest. I'faith, thou deserveth to be the king of the cocks and of the hens too, thou hast such a superlative talent for crowing."

"Dost think so, indeed!" cried Gib, grinning with such delight it did stretch his monstrous mouth from ear to ear. "Perchance, if such be your opinion, you will advance me in the profession of which you have said so oft I am like to be so great an ornament?"

"O' my word there would be no such an ornament amongst us," remarked the other, looking upon the uncomely figure before him with all the seriousness he could put on. "But stick to the cock, I prythee, for in the playing of that thou hast not thy peer; yet would I venture to assert that, shouldst thou make an essay in any other part, there would be none like unto thee in the performance of it."

"Doth any person wait?" inquired Master Shakspeare, after reading of the letter, whilst the two were talking.

"None, an' it please you," replied the boy. "It was my Lord Southampton who gave it to me, as I was showing of Will Peppercorn the way I would play Romeo, were I let." At this the two players looked at each other very particularly, with something of an inclination to laugh: "and my lord bade me carry it to Master Shakspeare," continued he; "and was so civil as to give me a silver groat; and then, merely requesting of me not to delay in the delivery of the letter, he took himself out of the playhouse."

"Having done what was required of thee, we will now dispense with thy company," said Master Shakspeare.

"Get thee gone, good Cock," exclaimed Master Burbage, lifting up his foot, and lending him such a kick of the breech, as he was a turning round, that sent him, as it were, flying through the open door.

"Nay, hurt him not, I prythee," cried Master Shakspeare, upon seeing the rapid disappearance of the call-boy, though he could not help laughing.

"O' my life, I do believe he hath no more feeling in him than a stone," replied the other, who was very merry upon it. "I doubt not, if he were handsomely paid, he would allow himself to be kicked from this world to the next. He liketh nothing so well. I have seen him rejoice at having a cuff from any of us; and a kick appeareth to delight him be-

yond all measure. But what sayeth my Lord Southampton?"

"Thou shalt hear," replied his companion, and without further preamble read the following:—

"'WORTHY MASTER SHAKSPEARE: To say aught of the delicate pleasure I have received from that marvellous sweet poem you have done my poor name the honor of dedicating unto me, I can not at this present, as I lack time to express all that I feel; and to do less than that, were not to do you justice. Rest you satisfied, then, that though I be silent on the matter, I am eloquent enough at heart: for well can I appreciate such things, and exceeding glad shall I be to prove how well I think of them. On the receipt of this, please you to come to me at my dwelling, for I am desirous you should do me a favor, the granting of which will be to my extreme gratification. "'H. W.'"

"O' my life he be but a scurvy fellow after all," exclaimed Master Burbage, jumping up from the table on which he had sat himself, and seeming in a wonderful vexation. "Instead of acting the true friend by thee, with such handsomeness as he might do, without hurt to him, he contenteth himself with asking a favor of thee. A fig for such patrons, say I: there be too many of this sort. Wondrous fine fellows are they all, who are exceeding bountiful with their praise, which costeth nothing; but when there shall come a fine occasion for showing that generousness of soul which one that hath the power should always show to him he assumeth to be the patron to, they slink away, and will do nothing."

"Thou dost grossly abuse him, I will be bound for't," said Master Shakspeare, warmly. "I do not think there breathes a better, a truer, or gentler heart, than is my Lord of Southampton. I see nothing in the letter but the kindly disposition I have ever known in him."

"Kindly fig's end!" cried the other, seemingly in no very pleasant mood; "talk not to me of kindly dispositions, that be shown in naught but mere words. I have no patience with such."

"Notwithstanding of which, I shall haste to my lord's without loss of time," observed his companion. "Whatever favor it may be that I can confer, he may depend on receiving, and right glad shall I be of the opportunity of doing it." And thereupon he proceeded to make himself ready to go out.

"Then thou deservest all thou wilt get for thy pains," said Master Burbage. "Depend on't, he intendeth only to suck thy brains for thee, which having done to an absolute sufficiency—a murrain on him!—he will be monstrous prodigal in his compliments, but as for putting of his hand in his purse, he would as soon meddle with the plague."

"I want not his purse," replied Master Shakspeare; "so he need never put his hand there for me: but of his willingness to serve me, I am well convinced. Wilt go with me?" he added, as he was making for the door.

"Nay I am bound for the very prettiest woman that lives," observed his companion, seemingly putting of his dress in the very properest order, as he stood before a large mirror nigh unto the fire. "Oh! she hath such a delicate waist, and so dainty an ankle—such lustrous eyes—so ruby a lip—so"——

"Another Joanna?" here interrupted Master Shakspeare.

"Hang Joanna!" exclaimed Master Burbage, with extreme asperity, and quickly followed his friend, who had gone laughing out of the room.

Master Shakspeare made the best of his way to the Lord Southampton's, pleased in his heart that he had it in his power to oblige one for whom he entertained so perfect a respect. He found him in his study—an elegant chamber of moderate dimensions, well furnished with books, together with some few pictures. He was sitting before a pleasant fire, having wine, and fruit, and some choice cakes on a table beside him, and was reading of a book by its light, the time being toward the dusk of the afternoon, a little too early for candles.

"Welcome, Master Shakspeare," he exclaimed, as soon as the other entered the room, quickly putting of his book down, and rising to shake him by the hand. "Sit you down, and partake of such cheer as I can give you."

"With all mine heart, my good lord," replied his companion, cheerfully complying with my lord's request; and they presently, with exceeding sociableness, fell to drinking of wine, and eating of the delicacies upon the table, seasoning them with such friendly converse as was like to pass on such an occasion between two so well inclined to each other. There could be no mistaking the expression on the features of the young nobleman, for never was benevolence so apparent in a human face; and the fine.

open, manly countenance of Master Shakspeare, whereon was writ a free heart and a noble mind, was not less worthy of admiration.

"I have been reading of your truly delectable poem," observed my lord, as he pointed to the book on the table. "Indeed, I can not help but be a looking into it at whatever time I can find the leisure."

"I hope you have gathered some entertainment from it, be it of ever so slight a kind," answered the other, with that real modesty which can only be found in the rarest natures; "for it would be a discouraging thing to me to know that the courteousness which led you to the perusal of my book, came to an unprofitable ending."

"There can be no fear of that, on mine honor," said my Lord Southampton, kindly. "Indeed, I have found excess of entertainment rather than the lack of it. In your plays I have ever met with poetry of the very choicest, wherein it was difficult to say whether the thought or the expressing of it was the most admirable. But such things came as flowers met with in a journey. They grew, as it were, on the road-side of the play; and he who kept on his way could scarce fail of seeing and delighting in them; and they enticed him forward at every step. The Rape of Lucrece must be considered in no other light than an entire garden, laid out with such prodigality of flowers, that there be scarce any getting on at all, one is so continually forced to stop and admire this and the other."

"Methinks 'twould be affectation in me were I to deny I find pleasure in your commendation," remarked Master Shakspeare. "Indeed, I would venture to assert that he who pretendeth to a carelessness of praise, be worthy of no praise at all. I write, as all must write who have any true talent for it—in hope that what I have done shall be considered of some merit. That you commend it, is at least a proof of some kindliness on your part, the which can not but give me exceeding gratification, for I am assured you would not show so honorable a feeling unless you thought there was such worthiness in me as might warrant it. As to the judgment you evince in this your opinion of my poor performance, it doth not become me to speak, for every one is but too well satisfied with the judgment that be satisfied with him."

"Mayhap my judgment is but of small value," said his companion, "but at least it hath the recommendation of being sincere."

"There are few whose opinion I should be more inclined to bow to on ordinary topics," remarked his companion; "yet in this, methinks, the friendship you have distinguished me with hath given you partial eyes."

"That can not be, worthy Master Shakspeare," replied my lord. "Every one who knoweth what true merit is, can not fail of seeing it in this your exquisite poem; and there can be no partiality in approving of that which none but the most ignorant or the most envious could fail of commending. However, let that pass for the present. The wine standeth unnoticed before you. I am fearful you make but poor cheer."

"I thank you, my good lord," answered Master Shakspeare, refilling of his glass. "But it seemeth to me I should show an infinite lack of understanding were I to make poor cheer when the cheer hath been so bountifully provided." Then for a few minutes both appeared to be intent upon enjoying of the good things within their reach, saying little, save remarks of no moment relating to them.

"Mistress Varnon hath acquainted me with a strange secret," observed the young nobleman, with a smile.

"Hath she, indeed?" answered the other. "I doubt not it was of a pleasing kind; for a pretty woman's secret is usually well worth knowing."

"That is as you may think it," said his patron, still looking exceedingly amused. "But this is it: whilst you were in the garden with Dame Deborah, the last time we were at Islington, and, as of old, had left us two to such sweet delights as I can never be too grateful for, the loving creature told me that her aunt spoke of nothing but Master Dulcimer—was ever praising his looks, his dress, his manners, his music—his everything belonging to him, with so absolute an earnestness as was a marvel to behold—that she was melancholy and restless when he was away, and seemed as if she enjoyed nothing so much as the sunshine of his presence—in short"—

"Nay, the conclusion is manifest, my good lord," exclaimed his companion, laughing very heartily, in the which the young nobleman joined. "My vanity is infinitely tickled, So, her stately ladyship loveth me? I'faith, 'tis as ridiculous a thing as ever happened. Mayhap, if she were forty years younger, I would be well content: whether my teeth be

tender or my stomach be over dainty, 'tis hard to say, but I doubt not she would now prove so preposterously tough a morsel, I should be forced to leave the dish ere it had well been tasted."

Both continued to laugh and jest on the subject very merrily, for some minutes.

"Meant you not, in your note," continued Master Shakspeare, "there was some good office I could do you? Believe me, I shall be right glad to set about it."

"'Tis a favor I would have at your hands," replied my Lord Southampton. "Indeed, I shall be wondrously vexed if you refuse me."

"Think not of such a thing, I pray you," observed the other quickly. "Be assured there is nothing I would not willingly do to give you pleasure, so that it be but in my power to perform."

"'Tis a simple thing enough," said his companion. "It hath come to my knowledge that you are exceeding desirous of purchasing a greater share in your playhouse than what you already possess. Have I been told truly?"

"I have such intention, without doubt," replied Master Shakspeare, "but it is one I mean not to put in execution for some time to come."

"Think you it would be much to your advancement?" inquired my lord.

"Greatly," said the other.

Then the favor I would ask of you is this:—I have a thousand pounds of mine own, doing of no good in the world. Will it please you to apply it to the purpose you have mentioned?"

"My lord, I"——

"I will hear of no objections, Master Shakspeare," said he. "Mayhap, if you take it not, I may be tempted to apply it to some bad end; and you shall do me a great injury by having refused to give it a more honorable occupation. Whilst it lieth idle in my hands it can afford me no pleasure, but rather will be to me a source of disquiet; now when I know it hath gone for so good a purpose as the advantage of a worthy man, I can not help being infinitely content."

"Believe me, it can not be," exclaimed Master Shakspeare, who appeared so taken by surprise he scarce knew what to say.

"Believe me, it must be!" cried my lord, more earnestly. "I have set my heart upon it. I will not hear of a denial."

"Indeed, you must excuse me in this, my lord."

"I will hear of no excuses. Beside, you have already averred there was nothing you would not willingly do to give me pleasure. I hold you to it, Master Shakspeare."

"My good lord, it is so extraordinary large a sum."

"All the better—it shall do you the more benefit."

"'Twill be a rank abusing of your good nature—nay, take it not uncivil of me"——

"I do take it monstrous uncivil of you, Master Shakspeare, that you should make any demur in doing me this favor. There can be no pleasure so great as that you will afford me by your compliance."

"Then let it be but a hundred pounds, I pray you, my lord."

"I will not abate you a single groat of the thousand."

"I do assure you I can not bring myself to accept it, for I know not at what time I shall be able to pay you."

"Talk not of paying, else shall I be angry presently. I tell you, Master Shakspeare, I have received such infinite pleasure from the wondrous excellences of your genius that twenty times the sum I have mentioned would not have purchased. Shall I receive advantage and give none? I pray you no more denials. I have set my heart upon it, and it must be."

At this moment there entered a serving-man, announcing my lord of Essex and Master Francis Bacon, to whom his master gave orders for their instant admittance.

"I will send a trusty messenger to your lodgings with the money to-morrow morning, Master Shakspeare," said my Lord Southampton, as he in the very friendliest manner possible took his companion by the hand, which he cordially shook, his youthful face beaming with benevolence all the while. "And I sincerely trust it may be the foundation of a fortune worthy of your high deserts. Hush!—say not a word!" he exclaimed, seeing the other was about to speak. "My friends approach; and I would not have this breathed to any."

Master Shakspeare was silenced; but he reflected all the more. "And this is the man," thought he, "of whom Burbage spoke so slightingly! Why, what a princely heart he hath! O' my life! if I can not help myself of profiting by his munificence, I will do my best to prove it hath not been misapplied." And so went he on, so lost in admiration of

the other's noble conduct, as not to perceive he was the object of very attentive observation by a stranger who had entered the room, and, whilst the two lords were conversing very earnestly, yet in a low voice, as if on some important matter, at the further end of it, and the serving-man was putting a fresh log on the fire, and some clean glasses on the table, he, drawn to him probably by that appearance of superior intelligence in his countenance which none could look on without affection or reverence, came as close as he might, and sat himself down the more nearly to observe him. This was no other than Master Francis Bacon, then coming into some note for his great learning, and afterward so highly esteemed as the very chiefest philosopher of his time.

He was dressed in no way distinguishable from other young lawyers, wearing a doublet of a sober color: indeed, his whole apparelling was a complete contrast unto the gorgeous splendor of my lord of Essex, who affected to outdo all in costliness of dress. Master Bacon was rather of a comely countenance; of a gravity that was more pleasing than severe, having a mouth of some tendency to mirth, a thoughtful brow, eyes clear and bright, and a beard well trimmed. He seemed rather younger than Master Shakspeare; but they appeared, as near as might be of a like height. There then were the two finest intellects of the age met together for the first time. Each had heard of the other; and what each had heard was sufficient to make him desirous of knowing as much more as he could.

Master Shakspeare had not been but a very few seconds reflecting upon his patron's bountiful behavior to him, when he started up of a sudden, as if conscious he had committed some rudeness in not paying more respect to my Lord Southampton's guests, and seeing of Master Bacon regarding of him so attentively, he straightway, with a courteousness that did become none so well as he, expressed how glad he was to make his acquaintance. To this the other replied to a like purpose; and they presently fell to conversing one with another with as much freedom as if they were acquaintances of long standing. Yet was there a marked difference betwixt the two in their manner. Master Shakspeare was open and cordial, like a man who is at home with the world after much knowledge of it—he was perfectly at his ease; but Master Bacon, though not so much so as at first, looked to be in a sort of constraint. Whether he held the other in such respect as made him more reserved in his company than he was likely to be in any other, or whether his deep study of books had given him not sufficient opportunity for acquiring that graceful confidence which social intercourse alone confers, or whether his pursuit of the law had created in him a suspiciousness of any man's intentions till their excellence was proved, I can not take upon me to determine; but certes he was in some degree formal and sententious.

The two lords still kept at the further end of the room, conversing with much earnestness of look and manner, and in so low a voice it was plain they had got hold of a matter of deep interest to talk about. But of this took the others no notice. Indeed they were so taken up with their own conversation, as not to be able to heed what else was going on.

"I have heard wonderful commendation of your familiarity with the profoundest things," observed Master Shakspeare. "Of such learning know I just enough to make me inclined for a more perfect knowledge. Will it please you, Master Bacon, to give your opinion of the schools of philosophy possessed by the Greeks, that I may know, from one so qualified to judge, which may be the desirablest of them all?"

"I am but indifferently learned in such matters, believe me, Master Shakspeare," replied Master Bacon.

"Nay, you undervalue yourself I am assured," said the other.

"Indeed, it is as I say," answered his companion. "Yet of what small knowledge I may possess will I put you in possession; for I hold that he who hath learning, be it ever so little, and holdeth it back from they who have less, is as unprofitable a man as the most ignorant that lives."

"That be a sure thing," said our illustrious poet. "O' my life! I have no patience with such as do cuddle up in their brains whatever they know, whereof others be ignorant, and are so obstinately intent upon the enlightening of none, that they allow of their secrets being buried with them. Such exceeding selfishness ought never to be tolerated. There have been divers alchymists who, at least, so it be said of them, acquired famous insight into the transmutation of metals, the virtues of all manner of waters, plants, earths, and the like; yet have they kept such

things a mystery from their fellow-men, and their great discoveries, if discoveries they were, were of as little advantage to mankind as if the finders of them had never been born. For mine own part, I think that knowledge is a sort of money, which if it be hoarded up by one of these misers, and none know where it is secreted, and may not lay hand on it when they want, it shall be as good as nothing to them; whilst the more that share in the riches of learning, the less shall there be of those ignorant poor folk, whose poverty of knowledge it is the chief business of philosophy to relieve."

"Well said, Master Shakspeare!" exclaimed the other with some earnestness, for he was pleased at hearing of sentiments so akin to his own. "Philosophy is indeed that right admirable legislation which provideth for the poor of all countries and conditions—the halt, the lame, and the blind; and insisteth that every man who hath the means shall contribute, according to his ability, to the wants of his fellows. To describe to you the different philosophical schools that have existed among the Greeks, methinks is a labor for which I have not anything like sufficient leisure before me. Suffice it to say, it is in philosophy like unto what it is in religion throughout the world; there be a wonderful number of roads and by-paths, some more direct than others, and a few that go everywhere but in the right way; but the right way is always to be found by those who will sufficiently search for it. As for a distinct system of philosophy, anything of the sort can scarce be said to have existed before the time of Socrates; for though it be said Thales founded the Ionic, and Pythagoras the Italic schools, one might with as much show of truth call the proverbs of Solomon, or the fables of Æsop, a system, as consider that what the two preceding have said, which was naught but some few precepts or apophthegms relating unto morals and politics, should have such a name.

"It may certainly be said that Socrates founded no complete theory of ethics, but he left such materials as went a fair way toward it. He was the first philosopher who taught the sublime truth—to wit: that the principles of virtue are the laws of God, and that none may depart from such principles without suffering for it in some way or other. Plato stated that virtue could in no way be taught, but could only come as an emanation from the Divine Spirit. Aristotle, who was a disciple of Plato, and the founder of the peripatetics, taught that virtue is either of the theory or of the practice—the one being a proper exercise of the understanding, the other the pursuit of excellence; and that there are no such pleasures as those which do proceed from virtuous actions; and that happiness is either contemplative—such as may be derived from the pursuit of wisdom—or active, such as may be gathered from external conduct conformable to virtue; that the latter is inferior to the former, because the understanding is the chiefest part of our nature, and the aims to which it should be directed are of the noblest kind; but that for a state of perfect felicity both are necessary."

"Doubtless this teaching of Aristotle cometh nigh unto the right way," observed Master Shakspeare. "It seemeth to me a very proper teaching. Before I knew aught of Aristotle, it did always appear in my mind, much the same as you have said of his doctrines. I thought the first object of existence was to live virtuously—that virtue was the doing well unto others—and that happiness was that state of pleasurableness which must be the result of such well-doing. As for what he hath said of the understanding being the chiefest part of our nature, and the pleasures it affords being the choicest of all enjoyments, methinks none would dispute it. But proceed, I pray you: I should be loath to lose a particle of such excellent discourse."

"There was another sect produced by the school of Socrates, called cynics," said Master Bacon. "The most celebrated of these were Antisthenes and Diogenes, and they taught that virtue was the only wisdom, and he alone deserved to be called virtuous who could stifle his natural sympathies, and live in a thorough carelessness of the comforts and refinements of life, most of which they regarded as things that ought not to be allowed, because their influence tended to prevent that austerity wherein they supposed virtue exclusively existed."

"I'll have none of them!" exclaimed Master Shakspeare. "If men are to have no sympathy one for another, naught can result but entire selfishness in all; and if the refinements of life are not to be tolerated, all that is elegant in science and graceful in art,—in fact, all that must be most humanizing in intellect are clean lost to us, and we must needs degenerate into mere brutes. It might as well be said, a green gooseberry is more

desirable than a ripe one, as that an austere and crabbed cynic can be a better man than one of so ripe and sweetly-disposed a nature that he alloweth his intellect to exalt his humanity, whilst his humanity liberalizes his intellect."

"The next of the more celebrated sects of Greek philosophers were styled stoics," continued the other. "Amongst divers things, they maintained that nature impelleth every man to the pursuit of whatever appeareth to him to be good, and that as all animals derive pleasure from those things which be suited to them, which nature leadeth them to discover and enjoy, every one who seeth clearly into what is good, will presently take to conforming to nature in all his actions."

"That seemeth plausible enough," observed his companion. "Yet methinks it should have its limitations. To follow nature under every circumstance might lead to the hurt of some other, and a pleasure purchased by an injury should be eschewed of all honest minds; but to follow nature with justice to yourself and others, to my thinking, be to follow the very properest guide that shall be met with anywhere."

"On that point say I nothing at this moment," said our distinguished philosopher. "When the time cometh for speaking, believe me, I intend not to be dumb. But return we to the stoics. Their idea of happiness is to this effect—that no external thing can affect the happiness of any man—that pain, because it belongeth not to the mind, is no evil—and that a virtuous man must be happy in all manner of torment, for that virtue is no other than happiness."

"Nay, I can not hold with them there!" cried Master Shakspeare. "Indeed, it seemeth to me clean contrary to common sense. Any one who doth observe at all, knoweth that a man's happiness is almost ever in the power of circumstances—any one who knoweth what pain is, must feel convinced it be an evil—and as for what they have said of virtue being happiness, it hath no truth in it, for there are few so ignorant who know not that the misconduct of others, let alone numberless other causes, may make the most virtuous person that breathes, in a state of monstrous unhappiness."

"Then comes the Cyrenaic school, with Aristippus for its founder, and Democritus and Protagorus for its chiefest supporters," continued Master Bacon, without seeming to heed what the other had said. "They preached that the distinction between virtue and vice is nothing more than arbitrary—that no one thing can be sacred or profane, just or unjust, but as it shall be agreeable or contrary to established laws and customs, for that what is considered lawful to-day, human authority may make improper to-morrow; and that present pleasure is the sovereign good of man."

"O' my life, those doctrines be more preposterous than the other!" exclaimed his companion. "The true distinction between virtue and vice must needs be immutable. Men's ideas of them may alter, but the qualities themselves never change—at least so it seemeth to me. For instance, if a man do whatsoever good lieth in its power, and committeth no wrong to any in the doing of it, he can not but live virtuously, no matter what may be the laws or customs where he dwelleth; and if he do the reverse of this he must live viciously under any circumstances or laws whatever. But what other system had these Greeks?"

"Among others they had the system of Epicurus, which was in excellent repute of them," replied Master Bacon. "He taught that the ultimate good is happiness, which is a state in which man may be said to exist, when he enjoyeth as many good things, and endureth as few evils as may be possible to be met with in human life. He calleth pleasure good, and pain evil, which be not only good and evil in their own natures, but must be taken as the measure of whatsoever is good or evil in every object of desire or aversion, because we expect pleasure, in pursuing of one, and apprehend pain in avoiding the other. He maintaineth also, that any pleasure which preventeth the enjoyment of a greater pleasure, or produceth a greater pain, is to be eschewed; whilst that pain which removeth a greater pain or procureth a greater pleasure, is to be endured. He elsewhere proveth that temperance in the enjoyment of pleasure is no other than a state of virtue, and that virtuous conduct steadily pursued, produceth the greatest quantity of happiness human nature hath the capability to enjoy. These maxims, with sundry others of a like sort, with wonderful force of argument he putteth together and buildeth into a system."

"And a right famous system it must needs have been," exclaimed Master Shakspeare. "That happiness is the real aim of existence, surely none can doubt, and that the enjoyment of pleasure produceth the possession of happiness

seemeth to me as little questionable; but methinks that there is greater happiness in the pleasure we afford to others than there can be in that which the individual enjoyeth exclusively, and were I inclined to set others in the pursuit of the greatest felicity, I would say, go and create the pleasure of as many as you may, without injustice to yourself or any. But as these systems of philosophy appear but so many different ideas of virtue, and of the distinctions between good and evil, and their natural results, happiness, and misery, I pray you, Master Bacon, let me know what may be your opinion of these matters."

What Master Bacon's opinion was I can not here relate, as just at that moment the two lords left that part of the room where they had been staying, and came to the table, where, after a stately greeting from my Lord of Essex to Master Shakspeare, the four did sit down and partake of the cheer that was before them; but this omission can be no loss to the courteous reader, for if he turn to the many commendable volumes of excellent philosophy Master Bacon hath writ, he shall behold his opinions clothed with such fine arguments as I despair of being master of.

CHAPTER XXIX.

Don Pedro. By my troth, a pleasant spirited lady.
Leonato. There's little of the melancholy element in her, my lord: she is never sad but when she sleeps; and not even sad then: for I have heard my daughter say, she hath often dreamed of unhappiness, and waked herself with laughing.
Don Pedro. She can not bear to hear tell of a husband.
Leonato. O, by no means; she mocks all her woers out of suit.

SHAKSPEARE.

Fair angel of perfection, immortality
Shall raise thy name up to an adoration;
Court every rich opinion of true merit,
And saint it in the calendar of virtue.

FORD.

"WHY dost take on so, Bess?" asked the merry Alice, as she sat with her cousin in a fair chamber looking out into the open country at their house in Sherborne. "By my troth, thou art but little credit to womanhood. I will give thee up. I will forswear all relationship to thee if thou continuest to mope after this fashion. Well, if ever I be caught fretting after any man-animal, the world must needs be as good as at an end. I would as soon think of taking to the making of simples for consumptive puppies. Nay, o' my life, I would sooner begin the digging of my own grave with a pap-spoon."

"How thou dost talk, Alice!" exclaimed Dame Elizabeth, who seemed indeed exeeeding sad at heart, as she sat with her cousin working of some tapestry, whilst a beautiful little boy, doubtless her own, was riding a cock-horse round the room upon an old sword in its scabbard, with such shouting and gladness of look as showed it was wonderful pleasant sport to him. "Thou knowest he hath been gone away so long a time I can not but doubt of his safety."

"Nay, he be safe enough, I'll warrant him!" replied the other laughingly. "He knoweth that if he were to get any hurt and so vex thee I would as good as do for him. But these husbands be marvellously inclined to take care of themselves—took they as much heed of their wives now, there should be no falling out betwixt them. What a monstrous difference lieth in lovers and husbands! There is no more likelihood in the two, than may be found in a sparrow and a cod-fish. The one is always a chirruping, and billing, and hopping about one, as pleased as ever he can be—the other layeth his length where he may, careth as much for his wife as if she were a stone; and if he approach her at any time, seemeth like a very fish out of water. By my troth, methinks the difference betwixt wooing and wedlock be a difference indeed."

"I have not found it so," observed her companion. "Walter hath been ever the same to me. I do so wish he would come back! Alack! I can not but be wretched, when day after day passeth by and bringeth me no tidings of him. Surely it is better to know the worst than to live in this state of uncertainty."

"I tell thee thou hast no worst to know," answered Alice, and then turning to the boy, who was shouting lustily, she cried, "Walter! if thou makest not less noise on the instant, I will kiss thee within an inch of thy life." The child stopped a moment in his course, turned his laughing face toward his pretty kinswoman, shook his curly head with a famous archness, and proceeded on his way shouting more loudly than ever. "Ah, that is so like all man-animals, be they big or little," continued Alice. "For a contrary humor there is not their like in this world. Dost believe it, Bess, that once upon a time one of these would needs be after caressing of me, for truly some are of so monstrous an impudency it can scarce be guessed what they would be about; but

I pretty sharply gave him to know I would put up with no such thing, and threatened him with all manner of dreadful punishments made he but the slightest attempt at it. And what dost think the villain did?"

"Nay, I know not," replied her cousin.

"He kissed me on the instant!" cried her merry companion, with a voice and look of such extreme solemnity, that the other could not but smile.

"And what saidst thou to that," inquired Dame Elizabeth.

"What said I?" exclaimed Alice, seemingly in a great astonishment. "By my troth, my breath was clean taken away at so horrid a villany—I could say naught: but worse cometh to be told; for ere I could recover myself, the caitiff was for doing of it again. At that moment I fetched him so absolute a box on the ear, that ever since then he can no more hear on that side of his head than can a dead pig whistle a coranto." Here both jumped up quickly from their work, the boy in running round the room having tripped and fallen heavily on his head, and Dame Elizabeth, with a face marvellously pale, hastened to pick him up.

"Be in no sort of fear, Bess," said Alice consolingly, as the other took the child into her lap as she stood by, "he can not be hurt at so little a fall."

"But he *is* hurt, Alice," replied the mother, regarding the motionless child with a wild sort of fearfulness; "he moveth not a limb, and his little lips have no color in them."

"There!" exclaimed her cousin, as she noticed that he moved his arms up to his head and opened his eyes, looking as if in some way frightened, "I told thee his hurt could not be much."

"Oh, there hath gone a weight off my heart which was nigh pressing me to the earth," said the other with much earnestness, as she caught the child to her breast, and then kissed him over and over again with as true a love as ever woman showed. Upon examining of him carefully, it was seen he had been but a little stunned, and could have received but a slight bruise or so, for he presently went to sleep in his mother's lap, never crying in the least, as if he had been none the worse for his tumble.

This had scarce been done before there entered at the door Sir Nicholas Throckmorton, with as much mirth in his face as ought to content any honest man, and with this there was a sort of mystery, as if he was upon some trick or another that required secresy in bringing it about.

"They are come, Alice," exclaimed he in a low voice, and seemingly with a monstrous disposition to laugh outright.

"Who are come, uncle?" inquired she.

"Why, thy lovers, wench, to be sure!" cried the old knight, bursting out into a famous chuckle. "Stephen hath much ado to keep them in their chambers, they be so furious to have sight of thee."

"Oh, I did forget," said Alice laughingly, "I promised my lovers that this day I would give them an answer; and so hither have they come, each one, doubtless, fully convinced he shall be chosen of all the rest. Now will I show them such sport as they have no notion of."

"A mad wench! a mad wench!" exclaimed Sir Nicholas, giving free vent to his mirth. "Thou wilt be the death of me some of these days, thou wilt, thou pretty rogue."

Now, I tell thee what, good uncle," observed his merry kinswoman unto him, "if thou hast a mind to see what sport I will make of them"——

"That wish I of all things," cried the old knight, interrupting her quickly, "for in truth it seemeth such excellent fooling I would miss it on no account."

"Then get thee to the dining-room and hide behind the arras," replied Alice.

"That will I straight," answered he, and was going out chuckling mightily at the thought of what fine pastime he should have.

"I will be with thee anon," continued the light-hearted girl. "But make no noise, else shalt thou spoil all presently."

"Trust me no mouse nigh unto a cat shall show greater quietness." Then out he went, and made haste to the room she had said.

"Wilt go and see how I will use these lovers of mine?" inquired Alice of her cousin.

"Prythee ask me not," replied the other, in some sorrowfulness of heart; "I be in no humor for such scenes. Besides, the boy demandeth all my care: I am not sure yet he hath escaped hurt."

"Indeed he hath, Bess—there can be no doubt on't," said her cousin, more seriously; "but let it be as thou wilt. I must see these man-animals, now they are come here; but as soon as I have got rid of them I will hurry back to thee. So tarry awhile, dear Bess, and put a better heart on it. I am certain sure he will return soon, and then will he win the queen's favor, and everything will be as thou wouldst have it."

Dame Elizabeth only sighed in reply to this, and Alice, kissing of her cheek affectionately, hurried out of the room. At the bottom of the stairs she met with Stephen Shortcake, who was evidently, by the waggish expression of his countenance, one of the conspirators. To him she whispered something, and then entered the dining-room. There was a large arm-chair on each side of the fire, and into one of these she presently sat, with a monstrous demure face, looking exceeding dignified and sedate.

"Prythee breathe not so hard, uncle," said she, in a whisper; "thou wilt mar all else."

"Nay, I will scarce breathe at all—but hush! here cometh one," replied Sir Nicholas, popping of his head out of the arras behind her, and as quickly popping it back again; for at that moment Stephen Shortcake opened the door and announced my Lord Wiseacre: and sure enough my lord made his appearance, with a face as formal and severe as ever; and making of a low bow, walked up to the now solemn Alice with a gravity of deportment that might have become his great-grandfather's ghost.

"How fareth it with you, Mistress Alice?" inquired he, exceeding seriously and took hold of her hand with the air of a doctor about to feel her pulse. "Be it the cold breezes that make you look so bloomingly? Truly is it said, it be an ill wind that bloweth nobody good."

"Methinks what you have said is indisputable," replied Alice, very gravely; "and that which can not be doubted must needs be true."

"Indeed, and so it be," observed my lord, with a look of wonderful sagacity, as if it was a truth he was not before aware of. "It doth give me exceeding pleasure to hear you talk so profoundly; but understanding delighteth better than all things, and a wise woman is more precious than gold."

"Believe me, I affect not the vanities of youth," said she, in a gravity of tone and manner that did almost exceed his. "I have done with such frivolities. There is a time for all things. I mean now to devote myself to the acquiring of what I think most precious in this world; for is it not said, 'Wisdom is better than house or land?'"

"That is it out of all manner of doubt," answered the young nobleman. "Wisdom is a thing that—that is to say, wisdom is—in short, it be beyond all contradiction that wisdom is better than house or land, as you have justly remarked. But there shall be no wisdom without experience, and therefore if you lack experience, it be plain you can not have wisdom. Now this experience have I, in some measure. I make no boast of it, Mistress Alice; yet do I say I have as much experience as any man of my inches. And this be the reason. Experience ever came to me naturally, and with little trouble in the learning of it. It hath grown with my growth, and strengthened with my strength. I have lived upon it from my youth upward. Indeed, though I be in no manner given to boasting, I may assert no man that hath lived as I have, hath more experience than have I."

"In good truth be you so experienced as that, my lord?" inquired his fair companion, in a seeming astonishment and admiration. "What a marvellous share of wisdom, then, must be yours!"

"Mayhap I am better off than many in that particular," replied he; "but, as I have said, it is not in my nature to boast. 'Brag's a good dog, but Holdfast's a better.'"

"Is the moon made of green cheese, my lord?" asked she, very innocently.

"There hath been some dispute about it," answered my lord, looking as he thought monstrous philosophical. "For mine own part, I doubt it. It seemeth to me, that were it a cheese, there should be mice at it presently; for it be in the disposition of these animals to have an appetite for cheese; and did they ever get to the nibbling of it, it standeth to reason that before this the moon would have been clean nibbled away."

"Indeed, and so it would!" exclaimed Alice, with great earnestness. "Yet is it exceeding strange I saw it not in that light before: however, we are never too old to learn. Now doth it strike me how wonderful is your wisdom! It be impossible after this to doubt you have the great experience you spoke of."

"That have I, you may depend on," replied the other, evidently excellently well satisfied with the commendation he was receiving. "Therefore am I the best fitted of all your suitors to take you to wife. Should you give me the answer I have now come for, and which our similarity in disposition inclineth me to expect you will, you can not help leading a very pleasant life with me; for is it not written, 'A wise son maketh a glad father.'"

"How infinitely you talk to the pur-

pose!" exclaimed his fair companion, more gravely than ever. "By my troth, the woman that gaineth you will gain a treasure indeed."

"Dost think so, sweet Alice," inquired my lord, with a look of such thorough satisfaction as defieth all description.

"How can I do otherwise?" answered she. "Have you not acquired such superlative experience, there be no doubting of your infinite wisdom?"

"Then wilt wed with me, fair Alice?" asked he.

"That dependeth very much upon circumstances," replied his companion. "You know well I can not abide such men as are not of a ripe age, and of the very gravest discretion. As for yourself, my lord, you seem as nigh unto that which I would have, as I have yet seen. You look of a very absolute old age enough, only I would rather you had a sufficiency of gray hairs."

"By this hand, I will wear me a gray periwig, if you will like me the better for't!" exclaimed the other with extreme urgency.

"Then had you a fair stock of wrinkles, doubtless you would be more to my taste," said she.

"Wrinkles will I have in plenty, after we are married, sweet Alice," he replied, with a like fervor.

"Mayhap, if you had lost your teeth, I could the more affect you. It seemeth strange to me you should have such marvellous wisdom and yet have so many teeth. Methinks such experience as you possess, should have never a tooth in his head."

"In truth, fair Alice, I have that experience in spite of my teeth. Indeed, between ourselves, I expect not they will last long, for one or other of them, be ever troubling me with the most pestilent aching, tooth ever gave."

"Of what age are you, my lord?" inquired she.

"I look much younger than I am," replied he, hesitating awhile to say of what age he might call himself. "Yet, though I look it not, depend on't, I am just upon thirty."

"Just upon thirty—only just upon *thirty* said you!" exclaimed Alice, as if in a great astonishment.

"Nay, I mistake—nigh upon forty, I meant," answered he quickly.

"No more than nigh upon forty?" cried Alice in a greater wonder than before.

"Indeed, I scarce know exactly mine own age," replied my lord, as if in some perplexity. "But I doubt not at all, I can not be far short of fifty."

"Oh, I am ruined and undone!" exclaimed his fair companion, looking utterly disappointed. "I have been deceived in you, my lord. Never was poor woman so cozened before." The young nobleman seemed as though he knew not what to make of it. "O' my life, I took you for threescore and ten at least," continued she. "Your excessive gravity only accordeth with that time of life. Men at fifty be but mere boys. They can not have the great experience you boast of. I will not put up with one so young. I will have none of you. I pray you, never let me have sight of you again!"

At the hearing of this, the face of my lord got like unto that of a fat man seen upside down in the bowl of a spoon, it became of so marvellous a length, and of so singular a gravity. He seemed at first inclined to speak, but, as if seeing it would be all to no purpose, he presently stalked out of the room as solemn as a judge.

"Oh, thou mad wench!" exclaimed Sir Nicholas Throckmorton, showing his head from behind the arras, and laughing as if his sides would crack.

"Hide thee, good uncle!" cried the merry Alice. "Here be another of them coming." The old knight concealed himself as quick as he could, and as soon after as might be, the door opened, and Stephen entered ushering in Dr. Bashful.

The young divine, after making of an awkward bow to his fair mistress, who courtesied to him, and then sat down very demurely, advanced seemingly in some sort of trepidation, to a chair at the opposite side of the fireplace and sat himself on the edge of it, putting of his hat and stick on the floor by the side of him. He spoke never a word, but looked around the room seemingly examining of everything in it with extreme curiousness. His gaze next fell upon his companion, but finding that she was looking at him, in a moment his eyes were fixed upon the floor, and his face became of such a redness it was a marvel to see. In a minute or two he gave a sigh so profound, it did appear to have come from the very bottom of his heart, then, as if aware of what he had done, his complexion became of a deeper crimson than ever. All this time he removed not his eyes from the floor. Presently he coughed a little, like one who is about to speak. Alice thought

he had summoned up sufficient resolution to ask of her whether she would have him or not. Mayhap he would as soon have asked her to hang him. Though he had come for that purpose, it was the last thing he could have brought himself to do. After a bit he coughed again.

"Now 'tis coming," thought she.

"'Tis a fine day, Mistress Alice," observed he, still keeping of his look upon the floor.

"That is it beyond doubt," answered she, as gravely as she could.

"Indeed, methinks, it be a very fine day, Mistress Alice," said the other.

"Indeed, methinks so too," replied Alice.

"Dost not think to-day be a finer day than yesterday?" inquired Dr. Bashful, with an infinite earnestness.

"It hath something of the appearance of it," answered his fair companion.

"That it hath certainly," said he. To this she replied not, having no answer to make; and there consequently ensued a pause of some minutes, that the young divine employed in considering of what he should say next. It was plain, upon the fineness of the day nothing more could be added. Should he speak of the appearance of the country? or rather make some observation upon Master Shakspeare's last play? or inquire after her health? or ask her opinion of the sermon he had just published? He hesitated—and knew not what to be about. What he had said had made him a little more at his ease, but the silence was becoming irksome. He began to wonder whether she was looking at him, and the very imagination of such a thing brought the color into his cheek again. Then he thought he would take a look at her. But such was more easy to be thought than done. He remained some moments before he could bring his mind to it. At last, raising of his eyes from the floor, he turned them to the corner of the room the farthest from her, and with a sort of trembling in his limbs, praying, in his heart, she might be looking another way, he glanced slowly round the room toward the place where she sat, to his inconceivable confusion she was looking at him, and what he liked worse than all, there was a twinkling in her eyes that made him exceeding uneasy, added to which, she was holding her handkerchief to her mouth in what he thought a monstrous suspicious fashion.

In a moment his look was fixed upon the floor as if it was nailed there, and his face was as fine a crimson as was ever seen. Was she laughing at him? thought he. His seat felt marvellously uncomfortable. He changed his position, and in a minute or so altered it again, yet felt he none the easier. Presently he heard sounds which had a wonderful resemblance to a suppressed tittering. At this he was more uneasy than before. He would have given anything to have been anywhere but where he was; and, if he could have done it, he would on the instant have taken himself off never to have come near the place again: but it seemed to him as if he were chained to his seat. During this time his face felt like the fire beside him, and he could no more have taken his eyes from the floor than ventured to fly. To his horror the tittering became louder, and all at once he could plainly distinguish that there was some person behind the arras striving to smother his laughter, in which it was evident he succeeded not at all. The knowledge that he was brought there only to be laughed at, gave Dr. Bashful something of a preternatural desperation, so seizing of his hat and stick, with a face that seemed like to scorch his ruff, it looked so burning, and with eyes that glanced half angry and half frightened, scarce daring to look anywhere, as quick as he could, and without opening of his mouth, he darted out of the room.

"Oh, these man-animals! what goodly fools they be," exclaimed Alice, now giving free vent to her mirth.

"Thou wilt be the death of me!" cried her kinsman, holding of his sides and laughing right heartily.

"Back good uncle to your hiding," said she in a whisper. "Here cometh Stephen with another of the lost sheep." And sure enough scarce had Sir Nicholas concealed himself, when Stephen Shortcake ushered in Master Aniseed. He was not in such fine feather as he was wont, for in truth the expense he had been at in keeping the company of gay gallants who only cared for him as long as they could fleece him at play or borrow his money, which, with a remarkable regularity they ever forgot to return, had so wasted the fortune the old miser had left him, that he saw nothing but a return to the catching of rats unless he married the heiress he had been so long in quest of. He knew that the result of his present interview would seal his fate, and he came with the determination of exercising all his powers of pleasing to obtain the so much desired end.

"Ah, what ecstasy is mine!" exclaimed he, as he advanced toward her with a mincing face and a lackadaisical air. "Here sitteth my arbitress throned like some famous goddess of old in supremest elysium, and I, of all her manifold worshippers, alone allowed to gaze my soul away upon her very infinite beauty, and find a new existence in her most absolute sweet speech. In truth, I do feel as much delight as a rat escaped from a trap." And thereupon, he took her hand very tenderly, and looked in her face as though he were about to die.

"Ah, Master Aniseed, methinks you do but flatter," observed Alice, somewhat coyly, as it were.

"Nay, by this light I do not, delectable fair creature!" cried he, with a marvellous deal of affectionateness. "Believe me, I flatter none; and, least of all, could do so unto one whose incomparable delicate charms putteth all flattery at defiance. Speak, then, dainty sweet Alice! speak my doom—am I to be in the enjoyment of the extremest felicity which appertaineth to this terraqueous globe, or be thrust down in such intolerable misery as hath never been known out of Tartarus."

"Is your family of any note, Master Aniseed?" inquired she, with as much seriousness as she could put on. At this he seemed a little confused, for he expected not such a question.

"Indeed, some have been exceeding notable," replied he, at last; doubtless, at that time remembering that his grandfather had been a knight of the post of great celebrity.

"Said you not the Aniseeds came in with William the Conqueror?" asked his fair companion.

"O' my life, I can not but think they came in a long time before," answered the other; although he knew nothing particular of his family beyond the hanging of his grandfather at Tyburn, for a robbery on Gad's Hill, which, as may be supposed, he liked not to tell of. "But why speak of this matter. I pride not myself on my genealogy, believe me; I care only for the incommunicable rapture I seek in the gaining of the incomparable fair Alice. Surely it seemeth in some sort a strange lack of affection in you to question me on a matter so unimportant, at a moment so critical to my exquisite sweet hopes."

"Nay, it showeth no lack of affection, Master Aniseed, as I will prove to you anon," replied Alice, evidently forcing of a serious look upon her laughing countenance.

"Wilt prove your affection, heavenliest creature?" exclaimed Master Aniseed, sinking on one knee.

"That will I, beyond the possibility of doubt," answered she. "It hath come to my uncle's ears that you are not what you have given out; and he hath it from such authority as hath proved it to his satisfaction."

"Ha!" cried he, looking amazing confused.

"It hath been said," continued Alice, "that instead of being one of an ancient family, as you have said, that came in with William the Conqueror, or a long time before, many of whom have been exceeding notable, you are nothing better than the son of a pitiful poor rat-catcher, and have yourself lived by the catching of rats, till a miserly kinsman left you his property, and you thought of passing yourself off for a gentleman born. Now, although the catching of rats be doubtless an honorable occupation, my uncle is in a very tearing rage with you, for not having let him know you had aught to do with it; and mayhap it shall be thought notable enough to have one's grandfather hanged for the cutting of a purse, yet my uncle is in a monstrous ugly humor with you for keeping him in ignorance you had any such in your family. Whereof the consequence is, that he hath ordered two of our serving-men, with cudgels as thick as is my arm, to wait for you upon your leaving this room, and not to leave you till they have broke every bone of your body."

"Oh, Lord! oh, Lord!" exclaimed the now terrified rat-catcher, after having listened to Alice's statement with a countenance expressive of the absolutest alarm that ever was witnessed. "Oh, Mistress Alice!" continued he, now dropping on both his knees, seemingly to implore her clemency, "save me from these villanous serving-men! Everything you have said be as true as that rats will not be caught if they can help it. Save me, I pray you, Mistress Alice!"

"They have cudgels as thick as my arm, I tell you," said she.

"Oh, where can I hide me!" he cried, looking about him in a terrible frantic manner.

"I heard him tell them to be particular in not leaving a bone unbroke in your whole body," replied Alice.

"Alack, I shall be clean murdered! How shall I escape? I pray you, assist

me, or these bloody-minded villains of serving-men will be the death of me."

"Canst get up the chimney?" asked his fair companion.

"Nay, the fire would scorch me to a cinder presently," answered he, in an infinite moving voice. "Is there no closet I can creep into?" And then he ran about the room distractedly, poking of his head here and there to see where he could hide himself.

No, Master Aniseed, there is no place of any kind where 'twould be safe to conceal yourself in," observed the other.

"Oh, Lord! oh, Lord! If ever I get myself out of this with a whole skin, I will straightway give up playing of the gentleman, and take again to the catching of rats. Oh, how can I escape?"

"Canst jump out of this window?" inquired Alice, throwing open a window that looked into the park.

"'Tis a fearful height!" replied he, as he gazed upon the distance that lay between the room and the ground, which was some ten or twelve feet. "I must needs break my neck if I attempt it."

"Alack! there is my uncle's voice!" cried she. "I hear him nigh the door, urging the serving-men to enter the room and seize on you." Alice had scarce said the words when Master Aniseed, without venturing of another word, jumped himself out of the window, and finding himself unhurt when he got to the ground, he sat off at such a tearing pace that he was soon far enough out of sight.

"Oh, Alice! Alice! what a mad wench thou art!" exclaimed her uncle, at her elbow, looking as if he had found wonderful amusement in what he had heard. "But how didst come to find this out?"

"That it matters not you should learn, good uncle," replied she shutting down the window with an exceeding arch look. "But haste back to your hiding; there is another yet to come, who is the goodliest fool of all the lot, and methinks I hear him approaching." Sir Nicholas made two or three hasty strides and retreated to the arras. The door opening at this time, Stephen announced Sir Narcissus Wrinkles. "Ha!" cried he lustily, hitting of his hand against his leg, as soon as he stood within the door, "by Cerberus and his three heads, you look lovelier than ever I saw you. But my young blood will not allow me to stay at this distance when so tempting an object can be approached as closely as may be." And straightway flinging of his hat in a chair, he gave a short, quick run, like unto a cow's gallop, was at her side in a moment, and instantly took her hand very gallantly, with a look so marvellously tender she was obliged to turn her head on one side—she could not look upon him seriously.

"By Erebus and gloomy Styx!" he continued, "my heart be overflowing with extreme love for you, exquisite Mistress Alice! By day you do engross my thoughts, and by night all my dreams be of you and of none other. My youth is wasted away in sighs. I shall grow old before I can well call myself a man. In truth, my delicate sweet creature, if I am not this day made as blessed as I expect to be, I can not be long for this world. I must needs die in my prime, like a bud stricken with the worm."

"How is your sciatica?" inquired Alice in some sort of earnestness.

"Eh? what sayest?" asked Sir Narcissus, looking as if he was striving to appear not to understand the question.

"How is your sciatica, Sir Narcissus?" repeated his merry companion still with a famous gravity.

"Sciatica? sciatica? what sciatica, I pray you?" inquired the old knight, reddening a little in the face, for all his seeming to be unconcerned.

"I did hear you were lately laid up with the sciatica very badly," replied she.

"A good jest! By Castor and Pollux, an excellent good jest!" cried Sir Narcissus laughing, as if he really had something to laugh about, "an excellent good jest indeed. The sciatica! *I* have the sciatica! At my time of life too! Well, it be infinitely droll." Then he laughed again more famously than at first. "Now it is well known that for a strong back and loins there is scarce my match to be found. *There*, Mistress Alice—is that a back for the sciatica?" And thereupon he turned his back upon her, which was certainly of a more than ordinary breadth. "I should like to see the sciatica which could touch such a back as that."

"Methinks of late you have shown yourself monstrously afraid of stooping," observed Alice, still keeping on an exceeding seriousness.

"*I* afraid of stooping!" cried the old knight in a seeming wonder. "By Apollo and all the Nine, better and better! Why, it can be scarce a week since, for a trifling wager with a few youths about mine own age, I did gather up a hundred stones planted a yard apart, and stooped and picked up every one separately, and did place it in a basket nigh unto the

first. Nothing but the marvellous fine back I have could have stood such infinite stooping."

At this moment Alice dropped her pocket-handkerchief on the floor as if it was an accident. Sir Narcissus Wrinkles presently stooped to pick it up, but he had bent his body but a little way before he suddenly drew himself up again, putting both his hands to his back, and making a face as if he had swallowed vinegar by mistake for wine.

"My handkerchief, Sir Narcissus," said his waggish companion as gravely as she could.

The old gallant stooped again, bending himself very slowly, and evidently with extremest difficulty and pain, and got his hand within a few inches of the handkerchief, when with a long-drawn "whew!" he drew himself up more quickly than before, showing of a face that outglowed the poppy in redness, and distorted into an expression so painful, it was moving to look at it.

"I marvel you should keep me waiting, Sir Narcissus!" exclaimed Alice, as it seemed a little out of temper, though it was apparent in the corners of her eyes she was in as fine a humor as ever she was.

"Believe me, I have the terriblest stitch in my side, Mistress Alice"——

"Are you sure it be not the sciatica?" inquired she, interrupting of him with a wonderful seriousness.

"By Pluto, that be utterly impossible!" exclaimed he in a great urgency. "The sciatica troubleth only old men, and the stitch attacketh none but the stronger and more youthful sort."

"Well, if it be not the sciatica, get me my handkerchief, I pray you," said Alice.

Sir Narcissus once more stooped down, but more slowly than ever, and doubtless with an infinite share of suffering. It was evident he was straining famously, bending of his back and stretching out his arm to reach what he sought to have hold of. There it lay, within an inch or two of his fingers, and for the soul of him he found he could not bend his back another inch. It appeared to him as if a river of molten brass was rushing into his head, and a thousand imps of darkness were amusing themselves by sticking red-hot skewers into his loins. Feeling that to endure this another minute was beyond the power of human forbearance, and believing that if he failed in picking up the handkerchief the truth would be known, and he should lose his mistress, he summoned up all his remaining strengh into one great effort, and made a sudden dart at the object he was so desirous of gaining. That he grasped it firm is most true, but alack! he lost his balance, and the next moment lay his length upon the floor.

"Why, Sir Narcissus! methinks you have had a cruel tumble!" exclaimed Alice, doing all she could to restrain her mirth.

"Nay, it be only the slipping of my foot," replied the old knight, striving to take it very indifferently. Sir Narcissus by means of his hands raised himself upon his knees, and then began earnestly attempting to get upon his feet, but the first essay he made down went he upon his hands and knees again with something very like a groan.

"Oh, I have the cursedest stitch in my side that"——

"To me it looketh exceeding like the sciatica," observed his merry companion.

"A thousand furies!" cried the old knight in some vexation. "I tell you, Mistress Alice, the sciatica troubleth old men only. It can have naught to do with us youth."

"Well, get you up quickly then," said she as seriously as she might. "Yet it seemeth marvellous strange to me, that one who hath so lately stooped to pick up a hundred stones can not now do so easy a thing as pick up himself."

"Nay if it were not for this villanous stitch, I would have been up on the instant," replied he, and then he began again seeking to raise him. For all that he seemed to take such wondrous pains to succeed in what he was about, down he came the moment he sought to get footing on the floor. He tried once more, with more care than at first, and again he tumbled. At this he swore most vehemently by divers pagan names, and recommenced his labor with all the vigor he was master of, and down came he again with such force it seemed enough to knock the breath out of his body.

"Said you not a moment since, that for a strong back and loins there was not your match to be found?" inquired Alice, as innocently as you please. The question appeared to have put Sir Narcissus in a perfect fury, and he commenced so desperate a scramble to get his footing that he was like unto a madman. No sooner did he tumble than he essayed to rise; the instant he thought himself on his legs down tumbled he on his hands; and there he continued puffing, and groaning, and sighing, and swearing, till he

heard such sounds as made him desist of a sudden. He turned himself round, and to his extreme confusion he beheld his fair mistress laughing at him to her heart's content; and her uncle close at hand twisting of himself about with so excessive a mirth that the tears did run down his cheeks. Certes, if there ever was a sight to laugh at in this world, Sir Narcissus Wrinkles, as he then sat on the floor, was of that sort. In his furious scrambling he had knocked his periwig on one side, which gave to his face, which was of a very fiery color, so ludicrous an expression, that the rage he was in only made the more laughable.

"Oh! these man-animals!" cried Alice, seemingly half choked with excess of mirth.

"Alack, Sir Narcissus!" exclaimed Sir Nicholas; but what more he would have said was stifled in a fit of laughter. The old gallant uttered not a word, nor moved from his position; but looked on the two with a countenance so exquisitely foolish, that the gravest could scarce have gazed on it unmoved.

"Now, Sir Narcissus, what think you of yourself?" said his fair companion, endeavoring to recover her gravity. "Is it not most preposterous in you, at your time of life, to affect the gallant, and seek to pass yourself off for one scarcely arrived at years of discretion? You must needs be my husband, forsooth, when you are nigh old enough to be my grandfather; you would attempt making love when you ought to be saying of your prayers. You would swear you were monstrous strong, and of so fine a constitution, the like was never met with, when you can not stoop without tumbling, and have so confirmed a sciatica, you can not raise yourself from the floor strive you ever so. By my troth, I thought not there were such old fools in the world! But I beg I may see no more of you. I would as soon wed a superannuated baboon as take for my husband so monstrous a piece of folly as yourself. Fare you well, Sir Narcissus, and be sure not to stoop"

Here she was stopped in her speech; for the old gallant had, since she spoke, began to make so ridiculous a face, which grew more ludicrous every minute, that she could gaze on him no longer, and hurried out of the room in a violent fit of laughter.

Leaving Sir Narcissus to be lifted up by Stephen and Sir Nicholas, which was done without his saying ever a word, he was so crest-fallen he scarce attempted to breathe till he got out of the house, the courteous reader must follow the merry Alice to the chamber in which she had left Dame Elizabeth. There she found her, with the boy still asleep in her arms, and with tears straggling upon her delicate countenance.

"O'my life, Bess, it be exceeding unkind of thee to fret in this way," exclaimed her cousin, as she hurried to her, wiped away her tears, and affectionately kissed her cheek. "I tell thee he will return anon: there can not be a doubt of it."

"I feel assured some harm hath happened to him, else would he have been here long since," replied the fond wife, very dolefully.

"Believe it on no account, dear Bess," said the other, "it be the very falsest, wretchedest stuff that ever was thought of: it doth not deserve credit of any. I would not put trust in it, were it ever so. The rather believe that he is speeding back, after having met with wonderful success in his expedition, and that he careth for naught so much as the sight of his dear sweet excellent good wife."

"I wish I could think so, Alice," exclaimed her companion, with a profound sigh.

"And why not think so?" inquired her merry cousin. "Methinks it be far better thinking than the other. For mine own part, I would be hanged before I would allow of such paltry poor thoughts to fret me as thou hast. It can not be other than I say, so no more of this moping. Be happy as I am. I tell thee what, Bess, I have got rid of all my lovers, and they were every one of them so excellently well served of me, sight of any of them shall I never see again, I will be bound for it. Oh! it was such exquisite fine sport! I will tell thee how famously I managed." Here the promised narration was completely put a stop to, by Dame Elizabeth giving a loud scream, which awoke the child out of its sleep, and her countenance became all at once lighted up by a wonderful exultation.

"Bess! Bess!" cried Alice, looking upon her in some alarm, "what aileth thee?"

"'Tis *his* voice!" exclaimed the other, gasping so for breath she could scarce speak the words.

"O' my life thou art crazed," replied her cousin; "there is no voice of any kind as I can hear."

"Oh! I would swear to it," cried the devoted wife, with a very touching emphasis; "there can not be such another.

Here, take the boy. I will see. I can not tarry here a moment longer."

"Bese! Bess! if thou goest on at this rate, thou wilt break my heart," cried Alice, who was fully convinced her companion was distracted. "Whose voice dost fancy thou hearest?"

"His that I love better than all voices in the world," said Dame Elizabeth, fervently, as she stood up with her boy in her arms. "'Tis Walter! 'tis he beyond all doubt. I hear him in the hall, greeting Stephen and my uncle."

"Methinks I do hear something now," observed her cousin; "but be calm, dear Bess. If 'tis he, he will be here on the instant."

The words had scarce been said, when a quick footstep was heard, and in another moment Sir Walter Raleigh was locked within the embraces of his wife and child.

CHAPTER XXX.

Didst thou but know the inly touch of love,
Thou wouldst as soon go kindle fire with snow,
As seek to quench the fire of love with words.
SHAKSPEARE.

Alas! the snow, black shall it be and scalding,
The sea waterless, and fish upon the mountain,
The Thames shall back return into his fountain,
And where he rose, the sun shall take lodging,
Ere I in this find peace or quietness.
SIR THOMAS WYATT.

My suit is,
That you would quit your shoulders of a burthen,
Under whose ponderous weight you wilfully
Have too long groaned—to cast those fetters off
With which, with your own hands, you chain your freedom.
MASSINGER.

"'Tis exceeding strange, this story of Joanna," observed Master Shakspeare, as he sat in his lodging, with Master Francis, opposite a famous fire. "I scarce know what to think of her: but how behaved she upon the discovery of herself?"

"More strangely than ever," replied Master Francis. "When she recovered consciousness, I had got her off her horse, and she was reclining in my arms, as I stood upon the ground; and the moment she found she was known, she tore herself from me, with an appearance of extreme confusion, and as it did appear to me, in some sort of horror. Upon this I did use no lack of entreaty she would be calm, and allow of my showing her such attentions as my affection for her prompted; for in truth the knowledge that it was to her I was indebted for my deliverance from being made a sacrifice to the Indian idol, put every feeling of resentment against her out of my heart, and I could on the instant have loved her as madly as ever. But when I attempted to approach her, she put up her hands, and averted her face, and begged of me not to come nigh her, with so wonderful an earnestness, that I was quite moved at it. Still imagining only that she did this on account of the attempt on my life, to show how ashamed and horrified she was with herself for the acting of so monstrous a thing, I assured her I was willing to forget all that was past; and believing from what she had lately done, that I had misjudged her, I told her, if she would allow of it, my future conduct should prove the sincerity of my affection. I was approaching to take her hand, when, as if in a very monstrous alarm, she fell on her knees before me, and implored me not to touch her. I knew not what to make of it; and whilst I hesitated, she, in the same wild manner, seeming as if she knew not what she was saying, prayed I would not come nigh her, or seek to have speech with her till the morrow, when she would acquaint me with all I had a mind to know. Seeing the dreadful state of excitement she was in, and that to persist in my intentions would only the more increase it, I agreed to what she said, and on leaving her to the care of the young prince, I presently mounted my horse, and rode forward at the head of the escort, leaving the others to follow.

"Most religiously did I keep my promise; for I never so much as looked toward where she was the whole of the day, but rode along marvelling at her conduct more and more every minute, and thinking of what she must have suffered in travelling so far for my rescue, and wondering and imagining till I got myself into a complete perplexity. Toward the evening we arrived at the very village nigh which I had been kidnapped by that villanous Padre Bartolomé. We were as well entertained of the natives as formerly, and as soon as I could I took myself off to rest; but sleep got I none all the night for thinking of Joanna, and from the very absolute impatience I was in to see her, and hear the explanation she had promised me. In the morning, as soon as might be, I hied me to Pomarra, that he might get me speech of her. Upon inquiry, I heard to my exceeding trouble and astonishment, she had gone from the village, and that I must never expect to meet with her again."

"Left she no message?" inquired Master Shakspeare.

"Indeed did she," replied his companion. "Her message was that 'twould be useless my attempting to follow, or make any inquiry after her, as it was her determination never to see me again; and though she wished me every blessing that this world could give, she assured me that nothing was so like to secure my happiness as the complete forgetting that there ever existed so miserable a creature as was herself."

"That is marvellous strange!" exclaimed the other, and he seemed to be considering the matter very intently.

"I questioned the young prince and Harry Daring, what they knew of her," continued Master Francis. "From the former I found that she had told him how much I was in her regard when she sought his assistance to go in search of me, at which time she had begged his secresy, the which he kept with all possible caution up to the last moment; but Harry had never had the slightest suspicion that she was any other than an Indian woman, till I took the muffler from about her face, though he could not help believing, from her ready seeking of such perils as they encountered in their journey, that she had a wonderful liking for me."

"And you know not how she got into the country?" inquired Master Shakspeare.

"Not a word of it," replied his companion. "That morning, hearing that Sir Walter Raleigh had been the day before at a village a few miles above where we were, I, thinking my duty to my patron ought to be the first consideration, took measures for my immediate departure, and parting with Pomarra with great regret, because of his many commendable qualities, and the exceeding generousness of his behavior, I and Harry Daring got into a canoe with two strong Indians and such things as we had given us of the king of Guiana, and a famous plenty of victual of all kinds, and rowed down the stream till we came into the great bed of the Orinoco. There we had scarce got when, to our wonderful contentment, we observed the barges and the wherries all lying pretty close unto each other, approaching us at a fair rate. That Sir Walter was glad of our coming, whom he had long given up for lost, is to say too little. No father seemed so pleased at the return of a dear son after the absence of many years; and so little difficulty had I in making Harry's peace with him for his desertion, that he was taken into greater favor, and promoted to a much higher rank than what he had held. When we got to our ships, I was so constantly with Sir Walter, he asking of me what I had seen, and telling me what had befell him since we parted, and I writing at his dictation whatsoever he thought necessary for the goodly work concerning of the expedition that is now about to be published, I had but little time to think of Joanna, and when that I did think, I got myself into so strange a perplexity, that methinks, for all the good I had of it, I had as well let it alone."

"Hast never heard or seen aught of her since?" inquired Master Shakspeare.

"Never," replied the other. "I know not where she is or what hath become of her. What dost think of it, Master Shakspeare? I would be loath to condemn her without good warrant, seeing that she hath ventured so much for my safety; but there hath been such a strangeness in her proceedings that I like it not, however grateful I may be for the peril she hath undergone for my sake."

"Her behavior is involved in some mystery, certainly," replied his companion, with such concern in his countenance as showed he had his young friend's interest at heart in what he was saying, yet wished to make the matter appear better than he thought it was, knowing of the extreme sensitiveness of the other's nature. "From what I have seen and heard of her, I can in no way be brought to approve of her conduct. Perchance there shall be found such reason for it, as may give it a different coloring to what it hath possessed in my mind. I hope it may. It appeareth to me that she is of a disposition that delighteth in violent extremes, and one that no man could be happy with for long. In this is there no sense of justice either for herself, or for any other; and that nature can not be of any real goodness where such a sense be absent. As for her perilous journey in search of you, and many other things you have told me of, done previously by her, they doubtless exhibit a greatness of soul which might counterbalance much behavior of a meaner quality; yet, as it is evident she desireth you to forget her, for which it be reasonable enough to imagine she hath some sufficient cause, I would advise you to think of her no more. In my mind, it is much the properest thing you can do."

"Ah, Master Shakspeare! I would it

were the easiest!" exclaimed Master Francis.

"Of its difficulty am I well convinced," added the other. "When the heart hath fixed itself upon one, and hath for any length of time lived in the express conviction that the one so loved is the chiefest of all for excellence, it be in no sort an easy matter to throw off all thought and feeling upon the subject. Yet where it must be evident upon the very slightest consideration that no good can come of any further affection, or there be no longer cause for such honorable opinion, methinks it is the part of every wise man to endeavor to free himself from the dominion of such unprofitable impressions. Occupation, perhaps, more than any other thing, tendeth to this end. I am glad to find, notwithstanding your labors for Sir Walter Raleigh, you have used such opportunity as you had for wooing of the Muses. I know your talents to be of no ordinary kind; and I do anticipate from the play you have brought me for my opinion, such gratification as I have not received from the perusal of any."

"I am fearful you will be disappointed," observed Master Francis modestly. "It is true I have taken what pains I could with it; but after reading or seeing of any of your productions, what I was about seemed to them of so poor a character, that I left off more than once in despair of ever doing anything that would be fit to be seen by you. Today it did strike me there could be no harm in letting you have sight of it—knowing the wonderful liberality of your nature—therefore carried I the manuscript in my hand with me."

"I am heartily glad you have done so, and will lose no time in its examination," replied Master Shakspeare, and then added he in a manner that showed he felt great concern in what he said—"Excuse me if I be trespassing, but I have an exceeding desire to know whether you have yet learned anything authentic concerning of your father?"

"I know no more than I have told you of," answered his companion. "I have long wished to have speech with Holdfast, or at least to know in what circumstances he is, for it be like enough I might now do him some service; yet save his being a preacher among the puritans, and doth occasionally hold forth in Moorfields, I have heard naught of him to this day."

"I can not but applaud your desire to better him, if bettering he wants," observed the other. "Yet must I say, he deserveth but little at your hands. It is plain enough he hath deserted you most infamously, and that he at all troubleth his head about you, I can not believe."

"No matter, Master Shakspeare!" exclaimed Master Francis. "Though he hath been no father to me, methinks that should not release me from being a son to him; beside, if he be conscientious in the opinions he hath embraced, he may have become a good man—such as would be a pleasure to me to own as a parent. Mayhap though, he would be all the more inclined to think it a disgrace to own me as a child."

"Nay, it must be impossible for any man, were his rank of the highest, to feel disparagement in acknowledging one of your merit," replied Master Shakspeare affectionately. "I know not the father who ought not to be proud of such a son."

"'Tis your infinite kindness that leadeth you to say so," observed his young friend with a heartfelt look of thankfulness.

"O' my life, I would be right glad indeed, and proud too, were you son of mine," cried the other.

"And what pride would be mine to boast of such a father!" exclaimed Master Francis with marvellous earnestness. "Indeed, Master Shakspeare, I know not whether it be a weakness or what it be, but I have grown up in the belief that I was of honorable birth. What little I knew of my parentage, fixed in me from mine infancy a hope that the mystery which enveloped my father's name would one day or other be cleared to my own satisfaction and my mother's credit, and that I should then obtain such a name and station as might content my ambition. I can not help it, but it humbleth me to the very dust, to think that my father hath been but a paltry cheater, and my mother a"—— He was stopped in his speech by a sort of choking which made him unable to finish his sentence, and his face became strangely pale and distressed.

"Heed it not, Master Francis, I pray you," said his companion as he went up to him and kindly took him by the hand, laying of his other hand upon his shoulder whilst he stooped over him. "Though they who seek the reputation of the world must usually search after it with such helps as the world affordeth, his fame be much the most lasting and the most worthy that hath had no other help to gain it by than his own merit. There

are many persons of worship in the place of my birth who, because of their high lineage and great possessions, have hitherto looked down upon me who have none. Now it hath ever been my hope to make my writings of such a sort, that in the after time, the small town of Stratford-upon-Avon, shall be considered of the learned to have such greatness as the greatest cities could not boast of, whilst its persons of worship shall be held of no account, and I, whose humbleness they have despised so much, shall be thought the source from which all that giveth honor to the place shall flow. Try you, Master Francis, to have some such a hope, and I doubt not in the least, you will presently care no more about your lineage than do I."

"I should not care so much as I do," added Master Francis, "were it not for thinking that they among whom I now associate on a footing of equality, may sometime or other find out the meanness of my birth, and then treat me with indignity for presuming to mingle with those above me, and for seeking to be thought of some note when I was but little better than an impostor."

Here the conversation was broken in upon by the sudden appearance of Harry Daring entering at the door, seeming, from the laughing face he had, fresh from some mischief. Certes, there was now a wonderful alteration in him from what he was when he was apprentice to the barber-chirurgeon in Eastcheap. Though he could not be called a man, he had grown from the boy to be a youth coming nigh unto manhood—albeit he had no beard as yet. Still was he more than a head shorter than Master Francis, who for gravity of deportment and elegance of manner, was more a contrast to him than otherwise. For all this his free-heartedness and his fearless look were the more pleasant for a spice of roguery that might oft be observed in it, which made him quickly liked of all who met with him. His countenance, from constant exposure to the sun in a hot climate, had become almost as brown as a berry, and for strength of limb, it looked not as if he were soon likely to meet with his match. He was clothed in a handsome doublet with a rapier at his side; with other of the appurtenances of a gentleman, and a hat and feather worn saucily on one side of his head.

"Oh, Master Francis, I have had such exquisite fine fun!" exclaimed he, casting his hat on one side and making himself quite at home by drawing of a chair near the fire, on which he sat himself down, chafing of his hands and looking in a famous merry humor.

"What fun hast had, Harry?" inquired Master Shakspeare, who took a huge delight in him.

"Oh, the very capitalest fun that ever was," replied Harry.

"Prythee let us know of it," said the other.

"That will I and gladly, Master Shakspeare. You must know then, I started off this forenoon from Durham house intent upon calling on some of my old acquaintances to show they were still remembered of me. Well, I made straight for Eastcheap, and entered the well-known shop where I was apprentice as I have told you, and there I beheld everything as if I had but left it yesterday, with old Lather in it looking as pensive as ever, holding of a disputation with Master Tickletoby the schoolmaster, upon the merits of one Holdfast, a famous preacher among the puritans, as I understand from them."

"Ah! Didst say Holdfast, Harry?" inquired Master Francis earnestly. "Dost know where he may be met with?"

"No, not of mine own knowledge; but I doubt not it may easily be found," replied Harry Daring.

"It shall be inquired into anon, Master Francis, be assured of it," said Master Shakspeare. "But proceed, Harry." At this Master Francis seemed satisfied, and Harry continued his narration.

"Master Tickeltoby thinking me to be a stranger, presently took his leave; but not before he had, with an abundance of thanks for my courtesy, accepted an invitation to dine with me at twelve o' the clock, at the Mitre tavern in Fleet street. Then sat I down in the old arm-chair, and requested of old Lather in the courtliest phrase I could think of, because I wished not to be known of him, to do his barber's office in the cutting and dressing of my hair. He appeared not to have the slightest suspicion as to who he had got hold of, but evidently imagined me to be a new customer, and was striving his best to make me pleased with him. It would have done your heart good, Master Shakspeare, to have seen the absolute gravity with which I sat at my ease whilst he attended to me with as much formality as if I had been one of the aldermen, ever and anon treating me with some of the choicest of his Latin phrases, with which he favored me with a trans-

lation that was, I will be bound for't, as much unlike the original as his extreme ignorance of the matter could make it. To this I usually replied as gravely as you please, with some fine Latin of my own making, to the which I appended such a translation as I thought fit to give; and it was right famous sport to hear how the old barber did commend my scholarship."

"I doubt not it was droll enough," observed Master Shakspeare, looking amused at the idea of it.

"Then he fell to telling me the news," continued Harry Daring. "And a famous intelligencer he proved himself. What dost think he told me, Master Francis?" inquired he, seeming as though he could scarce ask the question for laughing.

"Indeed, I can not tell, Harry," replied his friend.

"He said that Sir Walter Raleigh had returned from his adventure in search of the famous El Dorado," added the other. "And that he knew for certain, for that a creditable friend of his had had speech with divers of the sailors, that besides Sir Walter bringing home so much gold the ships were like to have been sunk by the weight of it, and conquering such a multitude of kingdoms there was no naming of them all in a summer's day, he had met with a strange people that had two heads, one upon each shoulder, so conveniently placed that every one man among them could see before and behind him at the same moment of time, and some of these he had brought with him to show the queen's majesty, together with two mermaids that could play marvellously well on the cittern—a real basilisk that killed people by looking at them—sundry parrots as big as a Michaelmas goose, that could speak several languages; and a monstrous kind of nondescript that was half a crocodile and half a monkey, and was covered over with quills full of deadliest poison, that it would discharge against all such as provoked it, and was of so ravenous a nature that it would eat a man at a meal."

"Truly, a horrid monster!" exclaimed Master Shakspeare with a laugh.

"I listened to him as seriously as I could," continued Harry, "and a famous job it was to keep my countenance; for he did lay such stress upon the credibleness of the person who had told him these wondrous tales, that I had much ado not to laugh in his face. However, I not only managed to hear it all out with a gravity equal to his own, but at the conclusion of it I assured him I had no doubt of its truth, for I had heard much the same from another quarter—a person of the strictest integrity, who was of the expedition, and he moreover stated that in his travels far into the interior of that wonderful continent, he fell in with a nation who were all barber-chirurgeons—divers of the boys being found pricking of cabbage-leaves, by way of learning to breathe a vein—others wrenching the teeth out of some jaw that did belong to a calf's head they had cooked for dinner, to be for them a lesson in the extracting of teeth—some were seen curling of old mops, and others shaving of dead pigs' faces, which were to afford them a proper familiarity with the offices of barbering: and then the men were engaged as brisk as so many bees in trimming of each other's beards, drawing of each other's teeth, breathing of each other's veins, and curling, and shaving, and physicking of each other after a fashion that was a marvel to look upon. Oh, Master Shakspeare!" exclaimed the young rogue, joining heartily in the laugh of his companions, "never saw you a face in all your days so astonished as looked that of Master Lather upon the hearing of what I had said."

"Methinks he had good cause for it," observed Master Francis.

"His spectacles seemed ready to hop off his nose with sheer wonder," continued Harry, "and mayhap had they done so they would have taken themselves down his throat, his mouth stood so invitingly open. 'That exceedeth in strangeness aught that hath been told me, honorable sir!' exclaimed he as soon as he could speak. 'But, as Cicero hath it, "Vox populi, vox Dei,"—which, as it must be known to you, meaneth, "wonders will never cease."' True, Master Barber, I replied; and is it not writ in Aristotle, 'hoppeti kicketi corum hic hæc hoc cum tickle me,'—that is to say, 'when barbers live at peace with each other the world shall stand still to look at the marvel.' 'Ay—I remember that passage well,' exclaimed he, 'I have read it in Aristotle scores of times.'" Here again the mirth was loud and general. Indeed it could scarce be otherwise, Harry Daring did take off his old master after so droll a fashion.

"After that I began to talk of apprentices," added he, "and innocently enough inquired of him whether he had any. Then he replied he had one, an excel-

lent quiet lad, who was out on an errand, whom he liked the more for that he was of so different a sort to one he had before had, who was ever a doing of some vile mischief or another, that he became quite the plague of the neighborhood. Upon further questioning of him, he in the most pathetic manner possible described what he and others had suffered by what he styled my pestilent humor, dwelling most of all upon the villanous trick I had done him before I quitted his dwelling, of mixing his pharmaceutical preparations of the most opposite natures, so that on examination of them it did puzzle his wits to find out what he had hold of; and placing of a shelf of gallipots so insecure, that on his going to take one they all tumbled down on him, and not only broke themselves, but broke his head into the bargain."

"That was too bad of you, Harry," observed Master Shakspeare somewhat reprovingly.

"So think I," said Master Francis.

"And so thought I," replied Harry Daring, with more seriousness than he had hitherto used. "Though I took it to be good sport at the time it was done, being exceeding thoughtless and mischievous, it oft struck me after, it was a great injustice; for, to say the truth of him, old Lather had never been a bad master to me; and it was because I felt I owed him amends for my many mischiefs, I had then paid him a visit. Thereupon I began telling of him that in my travels I had fallen in with this once mad apprentice of his, whose conscience allowed him not to rest easy because of the wild pranks he had played upon a kind and worthy master, and that from a desire to remove the loss Master Lather had suffered on account of them, he had sent by me a purse of twenty gold pieces; which I then and there put into his hand. At the sight of this, and at what I had said, the old man looked as though he could scarce believe his eyes and ears. He stared at the purse, and then at me, and then at the purse again; and then broke out into such commendation of me, vowing that for all my continual tricks he had ever loved me as a son, that my heart was touched, and I presently declared to him who I was. This made him so beside himself with joy and affectionateness, that in hugging me in his arms he burned my ear with the curling irons, till I cried so lustily he jumped away from me in a complete fright. The end of it was, before I left him I made him promise to dine with me at the Mitre."

"That was well done you, Harry," exclaimed Master Shakspeare, who appeared to be wonderfully pleased at what he had heard.

"Indeed it was," added Master Francis with the like cordiality. "But notwithstanding of Harry's reckless mischiefs, I would have vouched for the goodness of his heart at any time."

"It be wondrous kind of you to say that, Master Francis," replied Harry Daring. "But the very truth is, I never took any consideration of what I did; and if it promised to afford sport, I could not fancy there could be harm in it. However, to return unto my story. I crossed from old Lather's over to Geoffrey Sarsnet's. Instead of finding the jolly mercer passing of his jokes with his own ready laugh amongst three or four customers, as of old, there was he, sadly reduced in flesh, marching up and down the shop, wringing of his hands, looking as dismal as a dainty gallant in a shower of rain, and swearing he was about to end his days in the compter. He quickly told me of his troubles, saying how his daughter had deprived him of his chiefest customers by her undutiful leaving of the house, and hinting that the ruining of herself would have been no great matter, but to ruin her father was most unnatural and devilish. Having put him in a better humor by purchasing of him a few things I required, and letting him know who I was, I made him also promise to dine with me at the Mitre. I then started off after some of my old cronies. Peter Periwinkle, our neighbor the chandler's apprentice, I found making of farthing rushlights down in the cellar; and when he first caught sight of me in my fine apparel, he was so wonder-struck he let all the rushes fall into the tallow. I got a holyday for him without much to do, and bidding him put on his Sunday jerkin, I told him to be sure to be at the tavern by twelve, which he readily promised. Then posted I to long-legged Tom, the tailor's son round the corner, upon whom I came whilst he was being whapped by his father for ill-stitching of a doublet. Nevertheless, I soon managed to make peace betwixt them, and was promised Tom's attendance at the dinner. After that I hied me to big Jack o' the Turnstile, whom after some painstaking I found sadly out at heart, and out at the elbows too, because of his parents having lately died and left him to shift for himself as

he best could—which in truth seemed to me to be of the worst kind of shifting. As soon as I heard his pitiful story, I took him to a shop where clothes were to be had ready made, and had him fitted with a buckram suit, in the which he looked to be so taken with himself I thought I should never have got him away from the glass."

"Be he so much a Narcissus, then?" inquired Master Shakspeare laughingly.

"By Gog and Magog, he was as ugly a fellow to look upon as you may meet with anywhere," replied Harry. "He was pimple-nosed, wall-eyed, and bull-headed, and had a twist in his mouth that was as good as a joke to laugh at. It may be supposed I had but small difficulty in persuading him to dine with me, seeing that for some time past he had been made to forget that such things as dinners had ever been invented. Coming back I spied a wretched old fellow clothed in rags picking up some sticks in the road. I made up to him and gave him alms. On his turning round to thank me, who should it turn out to be but Gregory Vellum."

"Is he so much in want?" asked Master Francis.

"Nay, he be in no want at all," answered Harry. "On my making myself known to him, he made a pathetic lamentation upon the extravagance of people leaving such fine pieces of wood to rot in the streets, and straightway put the sticks in one pocket, and the money I had given him in another. Thinking to have some sport, I did invite him also to the tavern, of the which he eagerly availed himself."

"Asked he not after me?" inquired his nephew.

"Not one word," replied Harry, "his speech was all a lamentation upon his own poverty—that I and many others know to be nothing better than a sham. Well, from him I went straight to the Mitre, where there was a drawer of my acquaintance, and him I ordered to get ready as famous a dinner as the house could afford, which was done to the infinite satisfaction of all I had invited, not one of whom failed to attend. It did amuse me famously to notice the attentions paid to me by Master Tickletoby, whom old Lather had informed who I was, as they came along. He seemed striving, by his commendations, to make me forget he had given me the birch so oft. However, there I sat, king of the feast, making every one enjoy himself to his heart's content. Old Lather could eat but little, he was so pleased. Geoffrey Sarsnet seemed to forget he was so nigh to the compter. Gregory Vellum ate as if he meant to put provision in him for a month, notwithstanding which I spied him, when he thought none were looking, stuffing what he could in his pocket, to serve for another meal. Big Jack o' the Turnstile, long-legged Tom, the tailor's son round the corner, and Peter Perriwinkle, our neighbor the chandler's apprentice, rarely opened their mouths save to put something in them. Indeed, they looked wonderfully shy. But when the wine had been on the table a sufficient time (and though I took but little myself, I caused it to be drunk of others without stint), they three were the noisiest of the whole lot. The jolly mercer now became as jolly as ever, and had his jest as ready as any, and his laugh the loudest of all. From joking they soon proceeded to singing. At first it did require some pressing to get a song out of either, but before long every one was shouting of some ditty at the top of his voice. Still I made the wine flow down their throats as brisk as it could. At last there was a scene which for exquisite fine fun beateth all I ever met."

"By your description of it, it must have been a droll company, indeed, Harry," observed Master Shakspeare.

"But the best comes to be told," said Harry Daring, laughing so he could scarce get on. "There sat Master Tickletoby, bolt upright in his chair, staring at me as though he thought I was a ghost. Geoffrey Sarsnet was snoring by the side of him; Big Jack o' the Turnstile was for drubbing Peter Perriwinkle because he would not allow that the son of a blacksmith was a better gentleman than a chandler's apprentice; but on his getting up to have at him, he measured his length on the floor, from which he made no effort to rise. Long-legged Tom was crying like a babe, and must needs think of going home to his mother; but on making for the door he stumbled over Big Jack o' the Turnstile, and there *he* lay, unable to move; and Peter Perriwinkle, hastening to pick him up, in a trice was as badly off as the others. Old Lather knelt in a corner of the room, saying of his prayers over a basin, and Gregory Vellum was singing of the hundredth psalm whilst draining of an empty bottle under the table."

"O' my life, a ridiculous scene!" exclaimed Master Shakspeare, who had been famously amused by Harry's description of it, as was also Master Francis.

"Then paying of the drawer, I took myself off," continued the other, "and laughed right heartily the whole way I came here, thinking of what sport I had had with those I had left behind me. Indeed, had you caught sight of Big Jack o' the Turnstile, in his fine buckram suit, looking as though he thought himself a lord, you would not have forgot it in a hurry, I promise you. Then he would commend the wine as being the best he had ever tasted; which was true enough, for of such drink hitherto had he known about as much as doth a blind puppy of daylight."

"In truth, Harry, I would have given something to have been of the party," observed Master Shakspeare. "But I must now have you both with me to the playhouse," he added, as he rose from his seat. His companions jumped up immediately, and in a few minutes they were proceeding together in the direction of the playhouse in the Blackfriars.

CHAPTER XXXI.

Ye have no cause to fear—be bolde,
For ye may here lie uncontrouled.
And ye in this have good avauntage,
For lyeng is your comen usage.
JOHN HEYWOOD.

Be of your patron's mind whate'er he says,
Sleep very much, think little, and talk less;
Mind neither good nor bad, nor right nor wrong,
But eat your pudding, fool, and hold your tongue.
PRIOR.

Noble friend,
You bind me ever to you: this shall stand
As the firm seal annexed to my hand.
WEBSTER.

IT was some few weeks after the conversation related in the preceding chapter, Sir Robert Cecil sat in the armory at Burleigh house, intent upon the perusing of a goodly quarto volume. There sat a devilish sneer upon his countenance the whilst he turned over the pages, as if he saw in them naught but matter for to be despised; and as he proceeded, he read not as a student who hath any liking for his subject, and goeth through it regularly, but as one who dippeth into a book only to find something he might cavil at, and careth not to know more of it. In this mood, and in this employment was he, when the door opened and in walked my Lord Henry Howard.

"Ever at study!" exclaimed he, as, upon closing of the door carefully, he advanced cheerfully toward him. "Methinks, one so learned in the natures of men, need care but little for the learning of books."

"I am but looking into this precious work of Raleigh's," replied Sir Robert, somewhat contemptuously.

"Ha!" cried the other, with a like feeling. "What hath this right famous discoverer of nothing to say for himself? Hath he described all the fine kingdoms he *meant* to have conquered, had he been allowed, or spoke of the wondrous riches he *would* have brought home had they fallen in his way?"

"I'faith you are not far off," answered Cecil. "The book, as much as I have seen of it, is filled with nothing better than marvellous descriptions. Here you may meet with an exceeding tempting account of some famous rich city—there whole pages concerning of an open country that beateth everything for fruitfulness—a little further, gold and jewels lie thick as blackberries in a hedge—by-and-by, you shall come to a plentiful lot of monsters, and in the next place, countless multitudes of Indians, all sick to have the queen of England for their ruler."

"But what hath he *done?*" asked my lord, sarcastically.

"Why, he hath spent all his money," replied Sir Robert, and thereupon both laughed heartily. "The book seemeth to me to have been writ for the purpose of bolstering up his reputation at court, and to induce others, by its alluring representations, to embark with him in another adventure to the same place."

"As for his reputation at court," observed his companion, "the result of this expedition hath done for him in that quarter. I have just left a circle of those that have most constant access to the queen, and rarely have I heard any one so mauled as was this once-powerful Sir Walter Raleigh. To be called a braggart, an imposter, a mere adventurer, and a writer of the very impudentest fables, be the smallest part of what they said of him. It is evident enough her majesty holdeth him now in wonderful small respect. As I have heard, she doth scarcely notice his many cunning attempts to get himself again into her good graces."

"'Tis plain he would give his ears to be in favor again," said the other; "he hath here writ a pitiful dedication to my lord admiral and myself, because we contributed somewhat more largely than others to his adventure. Little knoweth he how much the queen had to do in it.

As I told you, he now taketh me to be the powerfulest friend he hath, and would willingly move me to exercise my influence in his behalf, to get him again to court. This would I willingly do, seeing my own interest in it, but at present it is scarce practicable; for my Lord Essex hath got such exceeding power with her majesty, she careth not for Raleigh's presence, and there are many about her who, thinking to be in favor with her favorite, miss no opportunity of speaking in disparagement of his rival."

"To say the truth, my Lord Essex hath become so pestilent proud, there be no bearing with him," observed the Lord Howard. "Disliked I Raleigh less for assuming so much of the oracle, I would willingly assist in putting down the other."

"That anon," replied Cecil significantly; "he seemeth to hold me of but little account, yet have I managed so with the queen, that she could not do without me if she would; and I doubt not, before long, she will give me such a place of trust as may in some measure reward me for my painstaking."

"I'faith that be good news—but how didst manage it?" inquired his companion.

"I made myself useful to her," said Sir Robert. "By means of my agents abroad I gave her intelligence of what was going on, before she could have a notion of it from any other quarter; and this made her well pleased with me, for she delighteth above all things to astonish her ministers by seeming to know more than they do, and thereby make them the more on the alert to get knowledge of such things. And then I have been ever ready to do her bidding in matters in which she could not safely have trusted others. I have gone on secret messages—I have ridden hard and fast on long journeys—I have endured fatigue of body and trouble of mind—ventured into peril, and suffered contumely, with as much apparent cheerfulness of heart, as if I took wonderful pleasure in it: and all to obtain the queen's confidence."

"I heard say a short time since you were gone on a special mission from her majesty to the famous Dr. Dee," remarked the other; "some said it was that the cunning man might consult the stars as to whether it was propitious to attack the Spaniards; others knew for certain you were sent by the queen's command to know if it would be safe for her to be let blood; and a few would have it, that it being well known he had discovered the philosopher's stone, her majesty was monstrous eager to have the use of it."

"They knew but little of the matter," replied Cecil. "The truth is, although her majesty hath had great faith in the knowledge of this wonderful astrologer and alchymist ever since she commenced her reign, when she had him consult the stars for a propitious day for her coronation, his greatest value lieth in his excellence as a secret intelligencer."

"Ha!" exclaimed my lord, in some surprise, "doth the old conjuror play the spy?"

"None so well," answered his companion; "his reputation for hermetical learning giveth him great facilities for acquiring information wherever he goeth; and this he turned to good account in his visit to the court of Maximilian—during his travels in Germany—while he stayed with the palatine of Siradia, the king of Bohemia, and a certain rich noble of his, to all of whom the fame of his skill in the transmutation of metals, the drawing of horoscopes, the conversations with spirits, and other of the like marvels, recommended him; and without exciting of the slightest suspicion, he was enabled to send such intelligence to the queen of what was being done in these parts, as was of infinite service to the state, and proved of considerable advantage to himself. Somewhat in acknowledgment of his scholarship, which out of all doubt was more than the ordinary, and somewhat to show the queen's appreciation of his services, which are considered to be of the chiefest importance, he hath lately been appointed warden of Manchester college; and it is there I have been, by her majesty's order, to have his opinion on how stand the stars affected toward the French king's government."

"How mean you to work upon Raleigh?" inquired the Lord Howard.

"'Twould be impolitic at present to move for his return to court," replied Cecil. "I have a surer plan. I find that the queen is bent upon some expedition against the Spaniards which was suggested to her some years since by Raleigh, from the which it is not probable Essex will be kept—indeed, I know he is exceeding eager for it;—and Raleigh of course will be among the commanders, for the queen well knoweth his value on such an occasion, and, in spite of any prejudice she might have against him, or favor for his rival, would see that he

had his proper place, well aware how much it would tend to her advantage. Now it may either happen in this way—Essex, by his notorious rashness, may have the hap to get knocked on the head, and so I get rid of him; or Raleigh, by his superior knowledge and discretion in warlike matters, may get such fame over the other, that the queen could not avoid having him again in favor. The latter taketh me to be the best friend he hath, as I expected; and whilst I raise no suspicions of my real intentions, I doubt not of being able to lead him as I please, till such time as I may think it profitablest to get rid of him. But the extreme haughtiness of Essex maketh it impossible for me to have any firm hold of him by seeking to appear his friend; therefore there can be no way so certain of producing his downfall, as allowing it to come of his own rashness in battle, or by the natural hastiness of his temper, that will exhibit itself in some way offensive to the queen, if Raleigh be taken much notice of by her."

"An excellent good plan," exclaimed his companion; "but how, if, during their voyage together, they become great friends?"

"I have made them too jealous of each other for that," replied Cecil: "beside which I would take care Essex had round him such persons as should, with as much subtleness as might be possible, excite and foster in him, who is easily worked upon, an enmity of the other."

Thus these two crafty men proceeded. Cecil, whose great cunning was not to be equalled, developing his plans to my Lord Howard, who was at all times his willing agent and thorough parasite; and both determined to pursue those plans with no other object than the advancement of their own interests. After some further parley upon the like confidential matters, the Lord Howard took his leave, to go on a message to the Lady Howard of Walden. He had scarce gone when a serving-man announced Sir Walter Raleigh and Master Francis.

"Ha!" cried Sir Robert Cecil, rising quickly from his seat, and with an appearance of extreme cordiality, hurrying toward Sir Walter to welcome him. "Of all men living, you are he I most wished to have sight of. I knew not you were in London, else would I have called at Durham house. Be seated, I pray you."

"I arrived but last night," said Sir Walter, with a like friendliness of manner, but with much more sincerity of heart; and then added, drawing his attention to his companion—"allow me to present to you, my friend and secretary Master Francis, whose worthiness I think of so highly, that I would fain have others prize it as much as myself."

"Master Francis, believe me I am infinitely glad to make your acquaintance," observed Cecil, seemingly with an earnest courtesy. One so famously commended from so truly excellent a source, must needs deserve all my regard; and I shall feel hurt if you do not make use of my poor influence, if that it can advantage you in any way."

"I thank you heartily, Sir Robert," replied Master Francis, modestly.

"You see," cried Cecil to Sir Walter, pointing to the open book on the table, "I have been feasting my mind on your right admirable work."

"Like you the matter of it?" inquired Raleigh.

"I like it so thoroughly that, in its perusal, I have been bound, to the complete forgetting of the most pressing things," answered the other. "Indeed, never read I anything I was so charmed with. It containeth the very wonderfulest accounts that ever were writ; and proveth, beyond all I have known of you, your perfect fitness, above any, as a commander and discoverer of strange countries. Methinks *we* have a Columbus now; and I shall not rest satisfied till I see you acknowledged as such. O' my life, it putteth me to the fret to see the envy of base minds, that be ever busy in undervaluing of your merit."

"If they find any pleasure in it, let them," replied Sir Walter. "I heed them not. Nay, I look upon it as a sort of justice, knowing there be some who praise me greatly beyond my merits, that there should be others who will allow me no merit at all."

"But then to hear the things that be said of you by such persons maketh me clean out of all patience," added Sir Robert.

"O a fig's end for them!" cried Raleigh contemptuously. "If any say aught against me to my face my mouth shall reply; but if they must needs mutter their slanders at my tail, I will answer in such fashion as be good enough for them."

"Ah! 'tis but fitting they should be despised of you," observed the other.

"Doth the queen stand in any way better affected toward me, think you?" asked Sir Walter.

"I have lacked nothing in zeal, depend on't," answered Cecil. "Indeed, I have more than once done some hurt to myself in becoming your advocate; yet that I cared not for. What grieveth me so much is to see my honest pains come to naught because of the shameful jealousy of some, who being in favor at court, are ever prejudicing the queen against you, out of fear you should come and supplant them."

"Who are these you allude to?" inquired Raleigh. "If they be worthy of any notice from me, I will presently let them know what I think of them."

"Nay, I will name none," replied Sir Robert. "I like not being a breeder of mischief. I would rather assist in making you friends with all than foes with any. I doubt not that before any very long time, despite of the malice of your many enemies, I shall succeed in my constant endeavors to get you placed in such nearness to her majesty as your superiority in all gallant accomplishments, and your unrivalled experience in war and state affairs deserve."

"I am infinitely bound to you for the many great kindnesses you have done me," said Sir Walter earnestly. "I should certainly feel more than ordinary satisfaction in returning to the place I held at court, were it only to prove to you how grateful a sense I have of your extreme friendliness."

"Mention it not, Sir Walter, I beg of you," answered the other with an affectation of marvellous disinterestedness. "What I have done hath been from love of your notable fine qualities of heart and mind." Then turning to Master Francis, who was examining a curious piece of armor, he added—"Dost not think that suit of chainmail exceeding singular, Master Francis?"

"Truly, it doth seem of a most curious fabric, Sir Robert," replied he.

"It belonged to a famous gallant warrior," continued Cecil. "His great bravery and his wonderful knowledge attracted general attention, and he was so much prized that he became the particular associate of the prince he served, and of his chiefest nobles. Although his many excellencies made him every man's praise, none knew for certain of what family he was, and as he had ever kept a mysterious silence on the matter, it was supposed of some he was related to one who had drawn odium on his name by treason or sacrilege. All believed him to be of high birth, because of the princely manner in which he bore himself, and the equality with which he appeared to associate with the prince and his nobles; but upon its being discovered that he was nothing better than the base-born offspring of an intrigue between two vulgar persons, the scorn and contempt with which he was immediately treated even by the very lowest man-at-arms, was such as his proud spirit could not endure, and he presently made away with himself with his own dagger."

Master Francis heard this account with the very deepest interest, which increased as it proceeded. He tried to look indifferent, knowing that the gaze of the speaker was upon him; but the sudden burning of his cheeks, and the quick flashing of his eyes, would have betrayed him to the most unobservant spectator. He felt convinced Sir Robert Cecil knew his history, and made up the story he had told only to remind him of his disgrace; and this conviction made him feel more ashamed of himself every moment. Sir Walter Raleigh saw the confusion of his secretary, and knew the cause of it, and drew off the attention of Cecil as quickly as he could by inquiring the history of some other piece of armor, and then kept him in talk in a distant part of the room till Master Francis had recovered himself. Soon afterward, to his secretary's extreme comfort, Sir Walter took his leave.

Cecil was again alone. A smile of peculiar satisfaction was visible upon his features as he sat for some minutes apparently absorbed in thought. His quick eye had noticed the change of countenance in Master Francis, and he in a moment had a shrewd suspicion of the truth; but he soon dismissed the subject as one unworthy of his consideration. His thoughts were now fixed upon matters of far more moment to him, which were no other than the different intrigues in which he was engaged for the obtaining of political power for himself, that now, after so much patient plotting, seemed about coming to a successful issue. Whilst he was thus engaged, he heard a tapping on the wainscot, that made him hurry to the sliding panel elsewhere described; upon opening of which there entered no other than my Lady Howard of Walden, closely wrapped in a dainty cloak, with a close hat and muffler.

"This is wondrous kind of you!" exclaimed Sir Robert, now casting aside the absorbed politician for the devoted lover, as he led the lady to a seat.

"I doubt you deserve I should have such regard for you as to take this step," replied she with an air of wonderful seriousness, as if she was in no way satisfied with what she was about.

"O' my life, adorable sweet creature! —you speak but too truly!" cried Cecil, gazing upon her with most enamored eyes. "What high desert would suffice for so inestimable a thing as a proof of affection from one of so delicate a beauty as my Lady Howard—the admiration of the whole court of England—the envy of her own sex, the delight of the other, and the object of the very fondest idolatry to him who is allowed the supreme felicity of calling himself the humblest of her slaves."

"Fie on you, for a flatterer!" exclaimed her now smiling ladyship.

"Never was truer word spoke," replied her lover, lowering his arm from her shoulder, where it had rested a moment since, to her waist, which it presently encircled, as he knelt down on one knee before her, and with his other hand took one of hers and passionately pressed it to his lips. "By this fair hand! woman have I never seen in any way fit to be compared with you. For indeed, where else shall I meet with eyes of so lustrous a fire—the glance whereof melteth one's very heart away in gazing?"

"Methinks you shall easily find some of a brighter kind," said his fair companion, looking upon him with all the brilliancy her eyes possessed.

"Be sure nature hath formed none such," answered the other; then, having both arms round her waist, he added with increased fervor—"And where shall I find me a form of such exquisite proportions as this I hold in my loving embrace? Oh! what rapture is mine thus to press to my most devoted heart a creature whose every limb hath such perfect grace in it that angels might be drawn from Heaven but to have sight of her perfections."

"Nay, in good truth you can not think so," replied she, smiling upon him in such a manner as showed she took huge delight in what he had said.

"I swear it!" exclaimed Cecil very fervently, and then raising of himself gradually, he continued with more fondness than ever—"And where shall I meet with lips so deliciously smiling, and of so tempting a ruddiness, that he who looketh on them unmoved must needs be little better than a stone. Indeed, there is in them so powerful an attraction that with an influence it be impossible to resist, I find mine own drawn toward them —ay, even upon them!"——

"O' my word now, Sir Robert!—this must not be!" cried his fair companion, looking to be somewhat offended at the liberty he was taking.

"Dear—sweet—excellent Lady Howard!"——

"Nay, I can not allow it!"

"Most charming—most admirable of women!"

"Have done!—or I shall be vexed with you presently."

"Believe me it be nothing but the excess of my passion that no reason can chain, no consideration destroy. I love you, beautiful Lady Howard!—and whilst I gaze on such incomparable charms as those I press within my eager embrace, I find exquisite cause for all I can say or do. It could never be meant that such a paragon of womanly grace should be the monopoly of one who hath no proper appreciation of your value. 'Twould be the grossest injustice ever thought of were it allowed. Throw not away so precious a gift as yourself in such a manner I implore you. I who long have worshipped you—I who have sighed in secret for you year after year—who live but in your presence—who think of naught, care for naught, and wish for naught but your own dear self—I best deserve you. Therefore, it be but in common justice, you should make the treasure mine."

"Indeed, I must not suffer any such a thing," replied her ladyship: nevertheless she did suffer it. It may to some seem strange that a man like Sir Robert Cecil, of exceeding unprepossessing appearance, dwarfish in stature, and noted for no gallant accomplishments, should play the lover successfully with so attractive a woman as my Lady Howard of Walden. But he had so beguiling a tongue that an angel might have been deceived by him; and it is a known fact that there be some women of so base a nature (of which sort was her ladyship out of all doubt), that with them the fame of honorable deeds, a true heart, or a mind gifted with the rarest knowledge, would have no chance; whilst a wily tongue that would sufficiently flatter their self-love, no matter how crooked the body, or how evil the disposition with which it was accompanied, would win any such with little trouble. The Lady Howard had managed to conceal an intriguing nature under a vast affectation of prudery so well, that she was not suspected of any; and by her husband she was looked

upon as the only truly virtuous woman of his acquaintance. He was much older than herself, yet was he ever playing the gallant of some pretty woman, all the while living in a monstrous fear that his wife should get knowledge of it. She and Cecil had been much together of late. Each knew the usefulness of the other: each was equally ambitious and unprincipled. The one played the lover to get the queen's confidante in his power; and the Lady Howard saw her own advantage in having as her slave a man evidently so bent upon raising himself to greatness as was Sir Robert Cecil.

These two were very lovingly engaged when all at once the lady jumped up in seeming great alarm. "That is my husband's voice!" exclaimed she. "Let me out quickly! I would not have him see me here for worlds."

"There is no time to get out at the panel, as I hear him approaching the door. Hide behind here, I pray you."

The Lady Howard had just time to get concealed behind the figure of a man in armor that stood in a corner of the room, when the door opened and in walked her husband, as Cecil was very fervently wishing him at the bottom of the Red sea.

"This is an unexpected pleasure!" cried Sir Robert with a famous cordiality, as the other with the gait of a dancing monkey came smirking toward him.

"By this hand! I thought I should take you by surprise," replied my Lord Howard of Walden affectedly. "I'faith!—I am ever surprising of my friends that be the truth. But I have come, having a secret of marvellous importance, which I can not rest without telling you of."

"I feel infinitely honored by the confidence you would place in me," replied Cecil.

"But mind you say to none the slightest breath of that I mean to acquaint you with," said my lord with a monstrous earnestness.

"Of that be well assured, Lord Thomas," answered his companion.

"It be such a secret as I should not like to have known of any," continued the other. "But I would as soon die as my wife should know of it."

Sir Robert Cecil had much difficulty to restrain from smiling, knowing, as he did, that the Lady Howard was so close to her husband she could hear every whisper he uttered; and that therefore the secret, whatever it might be about, and he knew of what character it was most like to be, could not help being known by her the moment it was said.

"The fact is, these women will be my ruin," added the Lord Howard with a truly wonderful complacency. "For mine own part, I know not why it is, for I see not I am a properer man than others, but I am ever a finding of some pretty woman desperately in love with me, and I can not help being like to get myself into some scrape with my wife, who is one of so rigid a virtue she can not abide the thought of anything unlawful. Indeed, I believe her to be the very purest wife that breathes."

"You have much occasion to congratulate yourself, my good lord," observed Sir Robert.

"Ay, that have I," said her husband. "But what am I to do? These women no sooner have sight of me than they straightway get furiously enamored. Mayhap, if I should appear indifferent to the many tokens they afford me of their attachment, they would go upon violent courses; and I should have their deaths upon my conscience, which I assure you, would make me infinitely miserable all my days."

"Doubtless, to occasion the death of a fair creature is by no means a pleasant source of after reflection," remarked Cecil with an excellent gravity.

"I could never exist with it," replied my Lord Howard. "In honest truth, I am of so mild a heart, that the knowledge of a pretty woman being in any sort of suffering for me, maketh me as pitiful as a child. So if any love me, I must needs love them in return. Methinks I could do no less without the very absolutest cruelty. What think you?"

"It be a delicate matter to pronounce judgment on," answered his companion. "Yet, being possessed of so incomparable a wife, it seemeth to me an injustice to her, that you should seek the love of any other."

"That is the very devil of it," exclaimed my lord. "Yet, if you will believe me, seek I the love of none. Do what I may they be ever after me. For my lady's sake I would fain avoid them if I could; but the more attempts I make to be true to her, the more violently do they persevere in their affections toward me. Never was man so besieged. Go where I will, I meet them. I can turn no way without finding some fair dame furiously intent upon loving me whether I will or no. O'my life, it be the difficultest thing possible to keep my Lady Howard igno-

rant of these matters. By this light, I know not what she would do came she to get acquainted with any part of what I have told you."

At that moment Cecil observed her ladyship peeping from behind the figure of the man in armor which was now at the back of her husband, and the expression of her countenance was a mixture of exceeding curiosity and anger. What to do he scarce knew, for he expected something would happen; but knowing that such women are never at a loss under the most embarrassing circumstances, he left the management of the matter to her.

"But now for the secret I would you should know of," continued my Lord Howard of Walden, with an air of mystery, as he drew Sir Robert closer to the corner of the room where his wife stood concealed. "I beg of you keep a strict silence. Should you drop a hint of it to another, mayhap it would come to my lady's ears, who hath such extreme horror of unlawful love, there be no knowing what mischief it might do, she would be so shocked."

"Unless you tell it her yourself, Lord Thomas, be sure she can never hear of it," replied his companion.

"I tell it her!" exclaimed her husband in a famous astonishment. "I would no more dare breathe a syllable of it to her than fly. She is so marvellous chaste a wife that were she but to suspect of such a thing, I doubt not she would have no more to do with me; and then the queen coming to know of it, with whom she is wonderfully familiar, I should not be able to show my face at court. So I implore you, be cautious. By this hand, I would not repose this confidence in you, but that I do believe you to be of so trustworthy a disposition, there is nothing you would rather not do than that I should receive hurt at your hands."

"Indeed, you but do me justice, my lord," answered the other with his usual affectation of sincerity. "It will ever be my happiness to serve you in any way in which my poor ability lieth; and from the admiration I can not but entertain for my Lady Howard, in consequence of the wonderful goodness of her nature, in anything in which she is concerned, you may always count upon my instant good offices —out of very absolute affection I assure you."

"Now, that be exceeding kind of you!" cried my lord, shaking his supposed friend by the hand very cordially. "It doth my heart good to meet such friendship. I would do you such another turn at any time."

"I doubt it not, I doubt it not, my lord," replied Cecil, returning the other's shake of the hand with infinite earnestness.

"But about this secret," continued his companion, dropping his voice a little, and assuming a greater mysteriousness than ever. "You must know there hath lately come on a visit to my wife, as sweet a young creature as eye ever beheld. To describe to you her charms of feature and person, could I never with any justice. In honest truth, her comeliness is of such a sort that none could gaze on without loving. By this light, I tried all I could not to be enamored with her. I would scarce look at her. I avoided being left alone with her at any time. I gave her such a lack of civil speech as must have offended any other. Yet it was easy to see from the beginning she had taken a desperate liking to me. She possesseth the most moving eyes woman ever had; and these she should fix on me for such a length of time, and with such an extreme tenderness, I could not help knowing what her thoughts were about. Still was I mightily circumspect in my behavior. Finding this of no avail, she would, ever and anon, fetch such woful sighs as were quite pitiful to hear; and give me such sly glances as would have set any man in a flame. However, I kept thinking of my lady, and regarded her with as little attention as was possible. Afterward she took to showing me the lovingest passages out of Master Shakspeare's most sweet poem, the Rape of Lucrece, and asked me, with a look that shot a thousand arrows into my heart and liver, if I did not believe them to be monstrous delicately writ. I must confess, at this I began to be somewhat moved. By this hand, there can be no man living who could read of such things pointed out to him by a sweet young creature, and remain indifferent. I could not help acknowledging, with some emphasis, that they were writ with a very infinite delicacy. Thereupon she smiled on me after so loving a fashion, that my heart could not avoid dissolving of itself away like a lump of sugar in a cup of wine. The next time I handed her to dinner she squeezed my hand. O' my life, she did squeeze it so tenderly I was forced into doing of the same; I could no more help it than I could help any other thing that I must needs do; for, to say the truth, she hath

the plumpest, delicatest hand I ever held; and no mortal man could have his fingers pressed by such a sweet young creature and feel it not.

"Still I tried not to love her. By this light, the more I tried the less I succeeded! There was she, day after day, giving me the lovingest looks, the touchingest sighs, and the movingest squeezes of the hand, that ever were known. I did all that could have been expected of me. But to hold out with an indifference of such things was more than I could have done had I been as virtuous as a pickled herring. My humanity would endure it no longer. I straightway fell to loving her as famously as I might. My heart is now filled with her night and day. I know that she is enamored of me to that extent she can not eat, drink, or sleep, with any comfort; and I, having knowledge of this, can not but be in the like way affected. All that troubleth me is the fear that my Lady Howard should suspect me. I am in a constant alarm at the thought of it. It be beyond all manner of doubt that she is the very virtuousest of wives; yet, betwixt you and I, when she hath been put out at all, she hath a look with her of so terrible a sort, that—oh Lord!" exclaimed he, breaking off on a sudden in his narration, and starting back in as complete a fright as ever was seen; for, to his utter confusion, there stood his wife before him; and, as if to show he had in no way exaggerated the terribleness of her looks, she had fixed on him a gaze so threatening, gloomy, and indignant, as must have made her appear to him a very Medusa.

CHAPTER XXXII.

Now, gentlemen, I go
To turn an actor and a humorist.
BEN JONSON.

Then to the well-trod stage anon,
If Jonson's learned sock be on;
Or sweetest Shakspeare, Fancy's child,
Warble his native wood notes wild. MILTON.

Seeing too much sadness hath congealed your blood,
And melancholy is the nurse of phrensy,
Therefore, they thought it good you hear a play,
And frame your mind to mirth and merriment,
Which bars a thousand harms, and lengthens life.
SHAKSPEARE.

"COME, Master Francis! Prythee let us tarry no longer! Master Shakspeare bade me tell you to be sure to be at the playhouse early, as there was a new play, which he wished you to see from the beginning."

"I shall be ready on the instant, Harry."

The two young friends were in a room fitted up as a library, that stood in a turret of Durham house, looking over upon the river, and Harry was leaning out of the casement, taking note of what sort of persons were upon the water, on whom he would make all sorts of droll remarks, and occasionally turning of himself round to hurry his companion, who was now fastening on his rapier. In a few minutes they were both speeding together in the direction of the playhouse in the Blackfriars. There was a marked difference between the two young men. Harry Daring was full of spirits, talking and laughing as he went, as if he cared for nothing in the world; but Master Francis looked with as absolute a melancholy as ever was seen in him, and took heed of nothing that was said of the other, or of any one thing or person that he passed. In truth, what had been told him by Sir Robert Cecil had made a wonderful impression on his sensitive nature, and had created in him with increased force those humiliating feelings regarding his birth that had oftimes before made him so miserable at heart. He fancied that it had been said by design, but this was merely the result of the state of suspiciousness and fear in which he felt when any allusion was made to this distressing subject; and which made him conjure up all manner of evils, when he thought it possible his fine acquaintances might find out that he was of such low origin. He had long since entertained a desire to see his reputed father, but now he was determined on it. It appeared to him that if this Holdfast was a good man, and would not be ashamed to acknowledge him as a son, he should be enabled to care the less for the contumely of those to whom he had used to look as the conferrers of that honorable reputation he had been so ambitious to acquire.

In these different moods Master Francis and Harry Daring entered the playhouse, and took their seats in one of the rooms. The lower part of the playhouse was nearly full, the scaffolding quite, and that in which the more genteel sort of the audience sat, was rapidly receiving company. The opening and shutting of the doors as the people were let in, and the hum of those who were talking in different parts of the house, were the chief sounds that were heard. Harry amused himself before the play began by noticing

the great variety of hats and caps which were worn by those beneath him; and certes there seemed to be some of every kind and shape under the sun. Master Francis was still engaged in pursuing of his melancholy thoughts, when all at once he was roused from his reflections by a sudden uncovering of heads and a great cry of, "The queen! the queen!" and true enough, upon looking opposite to him, he noticed Queen Elizabeth, clad in such splendor as he had not seen her in before, with a famous throng of lords and ladies entering one of the rooms, which was hung very richly with embroidered velvet. Before she took her seat, she came forward and courtesied several times, with a dignity and becomingness that did win her all sorts of commendations from those of her loving subjects who could get a sight of her. Upon the subsiding of the tumult one of the players came forward and spoke the prologue, which was well received, and then the curtain which divided the stage from the groundlings, slowly rose. All in the house presently directed their entire attentions to the players.

Master Francis now, for the first time, felt some sort of interest in what he came to see. He had not the slightest knowledge of the subject of the new play, or by whom it had been writ, but as Master Shakspeare had been so particular in wishing him to see it the first time it was played, he had no doubt it would be found of some merit. At the beginning he could hear but indistinctly what was said on the stage, which he noticed as having been fresh strewed with rushes, but on something reaching his ear he listened more attentively.

"No! Surely it can not be!" he exclaimed, and his face became so flushed, and then so pale, and he looked so wonder-struck, and felt such a quick beating at his heart, as he had before had no experience of.

"Eh? What can not be, Master Francis?" inquired his friend.

"Nothing—Harry, nothing," replied the other, as well as he could, for he felt as though he could scarce breathe.

"Silence, fellow!" cried my Lord Dimple, who was in the same room with him.

"Dost call my friend 'fellow'?" asked Harry Daring, turning sharp round upon the last speaker; but my Lord Dimple answered not. Mayhap he liked not the resolute look of the youth who questioned him. Master Francis pulled Harry by the sleeve, who, though he seemed wonderfully inclined for a quarrel, presently turned his attention to the stage. As for Master Francis, he seemed as though he could not sit still a moment. Now he was bending forward to see the players, and anon throwing himself back in his seat with a flushed countenance and anxious look that showed he took in the play a deeper interest than common. Whenever there was any applause from the audience he appeared more moved than ever; yet his eyes brightened up famously all the time as if he was as well pleased as any. Sometimes when no approbation was exhibited his cheek grew pale, and his whole appearance exceeding uneasy; but directly there was any clapping of hands his color came as vividly as before, and there was an extraordinary excitement in his look.

The subject of the new play was "The Right Tragical Story of Hypatia." It may not be known to all that in the early part of the fifth century there lived a lady of wonderful virtue, beauty, and learning, who was the daughter of the mathematician Theon of Alexandria; and was of so gifted a mind that she presided over the school of Platonic philosophy taught in that city, with such marvellous ability that she drew crowds of scholars, philosophers, and statesmen, from all parts, to hear her lectures; and was the chief adviser in matters of importance of Orestes, the governor of Alexandria, by whom she was held in the very greatest estimation. Now the patriarch of the city, Cyril—or, as he hath been since called by many who were about as little worthy of the title as he, St. Cyril—was an arrogant, turbulent, and bigoted priest, who, surrounded by a mob of worthless monks, as furious and fanatic as himself, was ever creating of some disturbance by aiming at the destruction of all such who would dare to worship God after any fashion save what he would allow; and he, envious of the superior reputation of the wise and beautiful Hypatia, and suspecting that she influenced the governor in his behavior to him—seeing that Orestes would not tolerate his mischievous conduct—caused Peter, a preacher, together with a party of his clergy, whom he had infuriated against her, every one of whom were priests of the devil rather than of God, to seize her as she walked along the streets, which they did like so many enraged demons, then dragging her into a neighboring church, with violent outcries and fierce execrations, they strip-

ped her to the skin, when having satiated their eyes upon the beauties of her person, they tore her limb from limb, carried the mangled body in horrid triumph through the city; and at last made them a famous bonfire, and therein had her consumed to ashes.

A very moving play was made out of this doleful tragedy, and the players seemed intent upon exerting themselves as much as was possible, that it might be well liked of the audience. Burbage played the part of St. Cyril, and got abundance of applause for the wonderful striking picture he did give of this priestly Richard the Third. Lowing was exceedingly dignified as Orestes, the governor. Demetrius, a young philosopher, in love with Hypatia, was very admirably played by Taylor: and other of the players had parts allotted to them in which they could best display their particular skilfulness. There was one part, though of but minor importance in the tragedy, that did require no ordinary ability in the performance of it, which was the character of Cleon, the father of Hypatia, and he found so able a representative in Master Shakspeare that nothing could exceed the admiration with which it was looked on by the spectators. In fact, though each player seemed doing of his best, none could have put his whole heart into what he was about as did Master Shakspeare.

Master Francis only appeared to get the more excited as the play proceeded. He took a hasty glance around him, and observed every part of the playhouse thronged with persons, all of whom, from the queen's majesty to the very humblest serving-man who had treated himself with standing room upon the scaffold, looked absorbed in the progress of the play. At this his heart beat more quickly than before, and he leaned himself back in his seat with a countenance in a constant flush, marked with a continual anxiety and fearfulness.

"Harry!" whispered he at last.

"Nay, prythee speak not to me," replied his friend with some little impatience, "this be the capitalest play I ever saw, and I be so taken up with it I can have no ear for anything else."

This rebuff, instead of offending him as it might have done others, appeared the rather to please him much, for he smiled in such a sort as showed he found some satisfaction in it. Presently the curtain fell to mark the close of the act. "Now, Master Francis, what would you with me?" said the other.

"This is *my* play, Harry," whispered his companion. He spoke in the lowest voice he could, for though he thought 'twould be a pleasure for his friend to know this, he could not bear that any of the strangers around him should have suspicion of it.

"*Your* play, Master Francis? Said you your play though, indeed?" asked Harry Daring, his honest face in a wondrous exultation.

"Speak not so loud," replied the other, in so little a voice he could scarce be heard. "This is the very play I did take to Master Shakspeare for his perusal the day you treated my uncle and others at the Mitre; and he hath got it acted by the players without letting me know anything of the matter, thinking for to surprise me when I should see it played."

"By Gog and Magog, what excellent good news!" cried Harry, seemingly in as great a delight as he could be. "I did like it infinitely when I knew not by whom it was writ, but now I like it a thousand times better than ever."

After this nothing could exceed the interest which Harry took in the progress of the play, save the zeal with which he applauded such passages as met with the approbation of the audience. What Master Francis had said of it was true. Master Shakspeare, on its perusal by him, saw of what merit it was, and after revising it with great care, he had read it to the chiefest of his brother-players, by whom it was so liked they would have it brought out as quickly as was possible; thereupon he gave to each the playing of such characters as he knew best suited their abilities, taking to himself one of less importance, which he studied with all the care he was master of; and took such pains that all should be perfect in their parts as he had never done even for plays of his own: then, when everything was ready, he did prevail on his patron, the Lord Southampton, through his influence with my Lord Essex, to get the queen to come to the playhouse the first time it was played, knowing this would be the means of procuring for it as favorable an audience as play could have; after which, having kept Master Francis in entire ignorance of the matter, he sent for him in the manner as hath been described.

It has been shown how desirous Master Francis was none should know he was the writer of the play. Indeed, he had ever been of so modest a nature, that he liked not at all being made the gaze or

the talk of those around him, and although the greater intercourse with society he had had of late years had taken from him much of his natural shyness, the situation in which he found himself placed, made him now painfully anxious to escape observation. With these feelings, it can be no difficult matter to imagine what he experienced when he heard, at the close of the fourth act, a famous fat old dame who, with a daughter as fat as herself, sat close to him, inquire of Harry Daring, if he knew by whom the play was writ.

"Ay, that do I, mistress," replied Harry quickly; "it be writ by my true friend, Master Francis here, who for an honest heart hath not his match anywhere."

Master Francis heard not what followed. He felt as if he would have given everything he possessed to get out of the playhouse, but he was well aware that if he attempted to move, all eyes would be upon him, so there he sat in a state of confusion impossible to be described, knowing but too well, that not only were the eyes of the portly dame and her portly daughter fixed wonderingly upon him, but that every one in the room was whispering remarks concerning his being the writer of the play. Even my Lord Dimple was heard to tell another lord who was beside him, who was now his true friend in place of my Lord Simple, with whom he had lately had a dreadful quarrel because the other would have it he was the truer friend of the two, that he thought the play must be a good play if, when it came to the end, no fault should be found in it. To take off his attention from these, Master Francis turned to look at the spectators before and around him. In a moment he drew back his head with more confusion than ever. It seemed to him, by the hasty glance he took, as if every eye in the playhouse was directed toward the place where he sat. In his mind there could be no doubt that it was generally known he was the writer of the play, and his sense of shame became every moment more overpowering at finding of himself put forward with a conspicuousness he had ever such dread of. In this belief he had somewhat deceived himself. As he leaned forward to gaze on the players, his youthful handsome face had attracted some attention, which, from the singular way in which he behaved, his restlessness, the ever-varying expression of his countenance, and the marked anxiety he exhibited, soon increased, and at last became so general, that during the interval between the acts, he was the subject of observation of nearly all who could get sight of him.

The last act having the deepest interest in it soon took off from him the notice of the spectators. He then found he could look up without being observed of any, and could not help feeling wonderfully gratified at the sight of so noble a company—the queen—her court—the many beautiful dames, and proud gallants that filled the rooms around him—the throng of groundlings beneath, and the crowd of those above, all with eyes fixed upon the stage, and ears so attentive to what was being said by the players, that you might have heard a pin drop. As the play proceeded toward its conclusion a more powerful feeling influenced him and quickly took possession of his nature. This was a fear that the spectators might not like the catastrophe. As yet no disapprobation had been shown. The applause was right hearty on numberless occasions, and seemed to increase the more at every scene. The players seeing that their exertions were probably appreciated, now took all the more pains with what they did, striving what they could that the play should be well liked to the end; but Master Francis, seeing how strongly the feelings of the spectators were excited, as the tragedy approached its termination, had so overpowering a dread that the ending would disappoint the general expectations of it, that at last he could gaze no more upon the stage, but sat himself as far back as he could, trembling with the most fearful anxiousness; and his heart beating with such marvellous quickness as made it quite distressing. The crisis came. He could only hear, beside the voices of the players, the half-stifled sobs of some fair creature in whom the deep tragic interest of the conclusion was exciting her powerfulest sympathies. All else in the house seemed as silent as the grave. He felt as if he could scarce breathe. The play had ended. For a second or two nothing was heard but the sobbing of several; when, all at once, as if by a general impulse, there burst forth such a torrent of tumultuous applause as seemed like to shake the playhouse to its very foundations.

"Ah, Master Francis, this be a play indeed!" exclaimed Harry Daring, clapping of his hands as if he would never have done, with the tears running down his cheeks in a very shower. Master Francis could not have uttered a word if it had been to save his life. He felt proud and happy: so happy it seemed as though

naught of what had plagued him so long, had now power to hurt him in the slightest—so happy, he could think of no one thing but the infinite gratification he enjoyed in finding his play so liked of such a noble company. Alack, his happiness lasted not long. Upon raising his eyes, in the room opposite to him, which, he had heard my Lord Dimple tell his friend, contained the French ambassador and a party of foreign gentlemen and ladies, he beheld no other than Padre Bartolomé dressed in a very courtier-like fashion, and close behind him gazing intently on Master Francis, sat the beautiful Joanna. He would have hurried toward her on the instant, but seeing her in company with such a thorough villain as he felt convinced the Jesuit must be from the baseness of his behavior to him, made him pause some minutes, the which time he employed in perplexing thoughts of how she got acquainted with him, and in wondering if they had knowledge of each other whilst he was with the expedition in Guiana. Upon again looking up he noticed that the room was empty of all its company.

"Come, Master Francis! the queen hath gone, so methinks we had best follow," here exclaimed Harry Daring, who, unnoticed by his friend, had hitherto been commending of the play to the portly dame and her daughter. "I warrant me you are monstrous glad at heart now because of your play succeeding so well. I can only say, never felt I such delight as I have this day."

His companion replied not, but he was anything but glad at heart. An uneasiness upon the subject of Joanna's mysterious behavior, had taken away all the pleasurable feelings he had enjoyed but a short while since. However, making a violent effort, he accompanied Harry Daring out of the room, and made direct for that part of the playhouse where he expected to meet Master Shakspeare, for he could not think of leaving the place without thanking him for the pains-taking and loving kindness he had shown in performing of his play. He had scarce put his foot upon the stage when he was met by his old acquaintance Gib, the call-boy, who, as soon as he recognised in the handsome gallant before him, the youth whom he had been so desirous should "do the women," shuffled round him, scratching of his head, with his eyes staring in all sorts of ways, and his mouth extending of itself to its greatest dimensions.

"Hullo, Beauty!" exclaimed Harry, laughingly, as soon as he caught sight of the call-boy, "did your mother feed you with the fire-shovel?"

At this moment Master Shakspeare came up, and gave very cordial greetings to both the young men. Master Francis, though he sought his friend with the express intention of expressing his gratitude, now found he could not say a word. All that he could do was to press the hand he held in his own, and look the infinite thankfulness he felt; and this appeared to be as well understood of the other as if he had said all it was possible for him to say. Master Shakspeare hurried him along, saying that some friends of his were waiting for him—Harry Daring following, till they entered a goodly room filled with a worshipful company, like unto that previously described in the chamber of the actors at the Globe playhouse, on the Bankside.

"My masters!" exclaimed Master Shakspeare, addressing them, as soon as he had come in, "I have brought you here one to whom you owe great store of thankfulness for the absolute gratification received of you to-day from the playing of that most sweet, very moving, and admirably-writ piece of tragedy, upon the doleful history of Hypatia, that hath been so well liked of the queen's majesty and a noble concourse of spectators. Of the excellent fine genius this play showeth, methinks it be scarce necessary for me to speak. I doubt not all here are as willing and as able to do it justice as am I. What further I would say is, that the writer thereof, to my certain knowledge of him, is of as courteous, as modest, and as sweet a disposition as ever it hath been my good fortune to meet."

Master Francis had but an imperfect knowledge of what took place after this. The handsome manner in which Master Shakspeare had spoke of him before so many of the chiefest wits and gallantest spirits of the age, had so bewildered him he could make no reply to the fine compliments and hearty congratulations of those who came thronging round, seemingly anxious to show their commendation of a writer in such repute of so notable a critic. His shamefacedness though won him such good opinion of many, as he could never have gained by the completest impudency that ever was exhibited. Master Shakspeare behaved throughout with so entire a friendliness as was truly delightful to look on; answering for the youth when there was any neces-

sity, just the exact sentiments he felt at his heart; and with pleasant jests, and kindly assurances, seeking all he could to make the other feel at his ease. It so happened Master Francis had managed to bring himself to some sort of composure when a new source of disquietude appeared. This was no other than my Lord Southampton coming in all haste into the room, saying the queen was so taken with the new play she would have the writer present himself before her without delay at her palace at Whitehall. Of those who heard this intelligence, there were none so well pleased as Master Shakspeare and Harry Daring, the latter of whom expressed his gratification in no measured language, with a perfect carelessness of the persons of worship by whom he was surrounded.

Master Francis, placing himself under the guidance of my Lord Southampton, started off for the palace. It is not to be denied that his thoughts now took somewhat of that ambitious turn he had once so loved to indulge himself with. But as the wind is impelled, so it will go. The knowledge that the queen had so liked his play as to send for him, was a sufficient basis for the most famous dreams of honorable advancement, to the entire forgetfulness of all other things; and on he went, building up his hopes higher than ever he had done. Nor was the conversation of his companion at all likely to make him less sanguine. The latter had heard from Master Shakspeare such accounts of his young friend as interested him greatly in the success of his play; and the little he had seen of him, in conjunction with the singular fine talent the play exhibited, so increased that favorable impression that he would gladly have done whatever lay in his power to serve him. What he said by degrees wrought in the other such confidence that, when he entered the presence-chamber, he was more at his ease than he expected to be.

Her majesty stood in the centre of a brilliant circle, the most conspicuous of whom were my Lord Essex, dressed very gorgeously, and looking as if he were king of them all; my Lady Howard of Walden and her lord, with whom, after a great to-do, on the part of Sir Robert Cecil, whom he ever after regarded as the honestest nature that ever lived, she was reconciled; Lady Blanche Somerset, and many ladies of her court; my Lord Henry Howard, my Lord Bumble, and divers other nobles and gallants. My Lord Southampton pressed forward, and with a very famous courtesy introduced his young companion to the queen's notice. It was evident that Master Francis's well-disposed features and elegant figure, set off to the fairest advantage by a dress that was at once simple and gentlemanly, created for him a favorable impression amongst all there. Some of the ladies whispered their commendations to one another, the gentlemen stared in some sort of curiosity, and Queen Elizabeth, who had a notable liking for men of a proper stature and comeliness, could not help gazing admiringly on the handsome youth before her. He stood with a very natural modesty at some little distance, his heart beating high, and his pale thoughtful face a little more flushed than ordinary.

"This play of yours, young sir, hath pleased us mightily," observed the queen at last, in her most condescending manner. "Out of all doubt it is a marvellous proper play. You seem scarce of ripe age enough for a play-writer; and for a play so well writ, disclosing of so excellent a judgment, it seemeth strange indeed it should be writ by you. Hast writ other plays?"

"Others have I writ, please your majesty; but this be the first I have had the good hap to get played," replied Master Francis, in a wonderful delight at hearing of such pleasant words from so honorable a source.

"And who is he that hath writ so admirable a play?" inquired her majesty; "as yet we know naught of the writer, save that we see him."

"I am the secretary of Sir Walter Raleigh, please your majesty." At this acknowledgment there was a dead silence, and many of the courtiers thought, however clever Master Francis might be as a writer of plays, he lacked judgment wofully in saying he was in any way connected with a disgraced favorite. My Lord Essex was the first to speak.

"Methinks Sir Walter Raleigh is exceeding fortunate in having such a servant," observed he.

"Had he showed as much wit in other matters as he hath in the choice of a secretary, mayhap there would be but little fault to find in him," added the queen. To an observation so shrewd the courtiers thought no reply could be made. Her majesty then turning to Master Francis said, "We asked you not of what office you held, but of what name you were." This was a question he seemed perfectly

unprepared for. Since his remembrance he had been called "Master Francis," by some, because he was a gentleman-like youth, by others, because such they had heard him styled. Not knowing of his father's name, he had himself used no surname. He liked not to call himself of the same name with his mother, fearing it might injure her reputation; and after he had heard of Holdfast's relationship to him, he had as little liking for his name, knowing it was that of a paltry cheater; so "Master Francis" he had still remained.

"We wait your answer," observed the queen, somewhat impatiently, for she would put up with no dallying.

"I am called Master Francis, please your majesty," replied he, in some confusion.

"Master Francis, is it?" observed his interrogator, sharply; "but hast no other name than Master Francis? Of what name was your father called?"

Master Francis hesitated whether to say Holdfast or Vellum. He dreaded telling a lie, and he liked not speaking the truth. He got more embarrassed every moment, and knowing that the eyes of the whole assembly were fixed upon him, only increased his uneasiness. The queen looked as if she was displeased at his delay in answering of her questions.

"Odds pittikins!" exclaimed her majesty, "by the backwardness of your replies we are inclined to think, with the old proverb, that it be a wise child who knoweth his own father." The laugh which followed this remark of the queen's did increase Master Francis's confusion to such an extent, he scarce knew what to do or say.

"Dost keep the queen of England waiting for an answer, sirrah?" angrily asked Elizabeth. "We asked of you the name of your father. Who was he?"

"I believe his name was Holdfast," stammered out Master Francis; who now felt he would be glad enough had he never entered the place.

"You *believe* his name was Holdfast!" exclaimed the queen, with marked emphasis, and then added, with her face in a sudden flush of indignation, and her voice expressing all the bitterness of scorn and disdain. "But we now see the cause of your so delaying us an answer. You must needs be the offspring of some low intrigue; and we wonder at your villanous impudency in entering our presence. Get you gone, sirrah! This be no place for the encouragement of bastards."

Master Francis felt at that moment as if all the blood in his body had rushed into his face. His heart throbbed so he was obliged to gasp for breath. His throat seemed as if tightened with a cord, and his temples were as though fire burned within them. He saw not the looks of contempt with which the courtiers regarded him, the surprise of my Lord Essex, or the pity of my Lord Southampton, as the queen haughtily turned upon her heel, saying to one of the gentlemen-pensioners in attendance, "Remove that fellow!" and heard not the cutting sarcasm of my Lady Howard of Walden, as she shrunk away from him as though he were a leper, or the many rebukes of my Lord Bumble, whilst he helped to lead him from the presence; and how he got out of the palace and made his way to Master Shakspeare's lodgings, he never could explain.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

My free drift
Halts not particularly, but moves itself
In a wide sea of wax: no levelled malice
Infects one comma in the course I hold,
But flies an eagle flight, bold, and forth on.
SHAKSPEARE.

These are the youths that thunder at a playhouse,
And fight for bitten apples; that no audience
But the tribulation of Tower Hill or the limbo
Of Limehouse, their dear brothers are able to endure.
IBID.

Mercy o' me, what a multitude are here!
They grow still too—from all parts they are coming.
IBID.

"Oh, Master Shakspeare!" exclaimed the young secretary, in a voice scarcely articulate for emotion, as he caught hold of his hand and stood pale and trembling beside him. "For the love of Heaven, counsel me, or methinks I can not but go mad." His friend marvelled greatly to see him in so terrible an excitement; and after talking reasonably, and with a sincere affection, he drew from him what had happened.

"To be buoyed up unto the highest pitch of expectation," continued Master Francis, still giving evidence, in his look and manner, he was exceeding moved. "To have the fairest hopes a sanguine nature ever had—to stand in the presence of the queen of England, and of a right noble company, and to be admired and commended by all—and then to have so gross an insult cast on me that my heart boils at it, and to be thrust out of the royal palace with such scorn as the basest

of wretches could scarce have deserved —indeed, Master Shakspeare, I can not —can not bear it."

"Regard it not, Master Francis," observed his companion, who seemed famously vexed his young friend should have had no better treatment. "Remember you are in no way to blame in this. The disgrace is theirs who put so infamous a wrong upon you."

"Knew you how earnestly I have sought an honorable reputation," added the other, "how, night and day, I have toiled that my name might be in some repute; with how great a love I reverenced those of admirable fame, and how anxiously I strove to gain for myself some of their excellence, that I might live to be thought as nobly of by others as I thought of them, you would know how deeply I feel the contumely that hath been cast upon me by the queen and her court! All hope is lost to me now—nothing but shame and contempt can be my portion."

"You wrong yourself mightily in thinking so, and you wrong the world more," answered Master Shakspeare. "Mayhap the queen is as good a queen as any; but that she hath either delicacy or feeling, will I never believe: as for the trumpery of the court, I have had sight of them. They will live, die, and rot, and be no more heard of. The good opinion of such be no more worth having than is the cackling of so many geese. Look abroad. There be thousands of honest hearts and manly intellects in the streets and the fields, the chamber of the student, the workshop of the artisan, and the warehouse of the merchant. 'Tis the breath of their voices that hath the establishing of a reputation. The opinion of courtiers be of no worth, and liveth but for a day; but the judgment of the nation soundeth the trumpet of fame, that hath its echoes from generation to generation, unto the ending of the world. Fear not you shall not have justice done you. I doubt not at all your merit standeth as fair a chance of honorable distinction with the world, as any that live. My advice to you is, let not what hath passed trouble you. Come with me to find out this Holdfast. If he be of any reputation he shall own you as a father. If he be of a different sort, heed not his relationship. Come what may, I will be as good to you as any father that breathes; and right happy and proud shall I be to be thought of kin to one of so estimable a nature."

The result of this truly honest speech on the part of Master Shakspeare, was the proceeding of the two toward the barber-chirurgeon's in Eastcheap. For all that Master Francis was so moved at what had lately taken place, upon coming nigh unto the house of Geoffrey Sarsnet he could not help recollecting of what sweet pleasure he had there had, and how it had all at once been dashed with bitterness, the taste whereof had since made his life a perfect misery; and from this he presently took to thinking of the strangeness of his seeing Joanna and the Padre Bartolomé together in the room with the French ambassador. However, his thoughts on this matter were quickly brought to an ending upon his entering the shop of his old acquaintance. Master Lather was standing with his spectacles on his nose, and his stick in his hand, intent upon the putting on of his hat, whilst giving some directions to an exceeding tall, spindle-legged, hatchet-faced boy, his new apprentice, whose dull look and awkward bearing made him a famous contrast unto the spirited and quick-witted Harry Daring, his predecessor. Noticing the entrance of two gallants, the barber-chirurgeon turned from his apprentice, and with his hat in his hand, with some courtesy, mixed with a marvellous fine gravity, he made up to them and asked them of their pleasure. It was plain he knew not Master Francis, though he had seen him frequently. Master Shakspeare took upon himself the business they had come about, believing he could best manage it.

"Know you, good sir, whereabout dwelleth a worthy man of this neighborhood, one Master Lather?" inquired he, putting on as monstrous serious a face as ever was seen.

"I be Martin Lather, may it please you, sweet sir, and there be no other of that name hereabouts," replied the other, wonderfully pleased to be inquired for in so courteous a fashion, by so noble-looking a gentleman.

"I am infinitely glad so easily to have found one of whom I have heard such good report," added Master Shakspeare, at the which old Lather looked to be in a greater delight than before. "I have come to you on a matter of some moment to this my friend and me, in which none but you can avail us anything; and from the honorable account we have heard of your great learning, your admirable skill, and your extreme worthiness, we have made bold to wait on you for your advice."

"I shall be proud to serve you, sweet sir, in anything wherein I have ability," answered the chirurgeon, bustling eagerly to put seats for his visiters. "Seat you, good sirs, I pray you; for is it not writ in Esculapius, 'requiescat in pace,' which meaneth, 'much standing tireth the legs'?" Master Shakspeare would have smiled, but he knew what depended on the keeping of his gravity, so he took the offered chair without moving of a muscle. "I am much bound to those who have so commended me to you," continued old Lather. "As for my worthiness, I would it were more than it is; for as that shining light of the age, Master Tribulation Holdfast, declareth, we are all but as pitch that defileth they who touch it."

"Alack, we are *very* pitch!" exclaimed Master Shakspeare, looking as doleful as if he were about to be hanged.

"As for my skill, mayhap it is something more than the ordinary," added the chirurgeon with some complacency. "I have studied my art but ill, lack I any knowledge in it. It be true enough I can not recover one dead of the plague, or fit a bald man with a periwig without stuff for the making of it; yet in aught which can reasonably be done appertaining unto barbering or chirurgery, methinks I can do as well as the best in the land."

"Better, I will be bound for't," said the other.

"It pleaseth you to think so," replied Master Lather, looking in no way displeased with such an opinion. "And as for my learning, I have ever been diligent in the studying of books; and perchance, I shall be found as good at the making of verses, or the quoting of Latin, or other clerk-like accomplishments, as some of our chirurgeons who pretend to greater scholarship. My painstaking hath been constant, and there be no becoming learned without wonderful trouble. Indeed, Aristotle himself sayeth that the chiefest aids to wisdom are, 'Pallor et genæ pendulæ, oculorum ulcera tremulæ manus,' the which rendered into the vulgar, is, 'late hours and early, thumbing the properest books, and discoursing with they who be more learned than yourself;' the which I have done this forty years."

"I am well convinced of it," remarked Master Shakspeare as gravely as he could. "But the business upon which we come is of such moment as requireth your instant attention. Listen, I pray you, worthy Master Lather." The old barber-chirurgeon was in a moment looking as attentive as any man could, whereupon the other proceeded. "We two, sick of the vanities of this most heathenish world, and long having scruples of conscience concerning of certain things belonging unto the faith as by law established, desire to enter into a more strict society, where we may be comforted by the hearing of some famous preacher, capable of ministering to our spiritual wants. We have heard of your being one of such a community as that we wish to enter into, and the manner in which you have been commended hath made us marvellously desirous to ask of you to render us your assistance in the hearing and having speech with such a preacher as you, in your superior judgment, may think best qualified to do us the service we require."

"That will I and readily," quickly replied Master Lather. "When you came I was on the point of attending a meeting of the faithful, where, if you will now come with me, you shall hear Master Tribulation Holdfast, who be, according to my thinking, the very searchingest preacher that ever expounded text."

This was exactly what Master Shakspeare wanted; and presently the three were proceeding together under the guidance of the barber-chirurgeon, who all the way kept sounding of the praises of the person they were so intent upon seeing. It was a difficult thing for any who were not of that sect to get admission among a congregation of puritans, as these being frequently oppressively used of the government, and contemptuously treated of the court, would retaliate with some disdain if they could; and this Master Shakspeare knowing, made him have recourse to stratagem. The anxiety and uneasiness of Master Francis had greatly increased. He was now about to see his father, of whom he had been kept in entire ignorance, and of whose affection he had been debarred for so long a time. From his earliest boyhood he had been of that affectionate nature which ever requireth some natural source upon which to pour out its sympathies. For his uncle he could have no feeling in common; his affection for Harry Daring though sincere was not powerful enough to satisfy him: nor was his young friend of such a disposition as could create in him any kinder feeling. At one time his devotion to Joanna was of so fond and exclusive a kind as left no room in his heart for love of any other. When he discovered this was not reciprocal there

was a void which all that he felt for Master Shakspeare and Sir Walter Raleigh could not fill. The shame that, to his sensitive nature, seemed to cling to him, made him despair that he should meet with any of a like disposition with his own. Indeed, it was not probable he would; for there was somewhat of an effeminate softness in it which no man that had not the fondness of a parent for him could regard him with; and though he had formed in his own imagination the most pleasurable pictures of fatherly regard, when he heard the character of this Holdfast, he felt the conviction that such a father he could neither love, or be loved by; and his heart again sunk within him. Now he listened attentively to all that was said by old Lather, and most fervently hoped that Holdfast might have become as good a man as he was deemed excellent a preacher.

They arrived at last before an old house with projecting casements running all along, one above another, which was in Houndsditch, and, the barber-chirurgeon leading the way, they presently entered a chamber of spacious dimensions filled with people. These were chiefly men, clad in formal cut suits of coarse material, and without ornament. They had usually stern forbidding visages, and famous grave-looking beards. Some women were there; but they were old and by no means comely. In the middle of the chamber, standing upon a barrel with a book in his hand, was a tall man formally clad, and with a very absolute sanctified countenance. He was preaching with a monstrous fierce gesticulation, and with a loud voice that was not the more tunable for having of an audible nasal twang in it. Now he would threaten terribly, his dark fiery eyes flashing the very gloomiest glances, and his long bony arms waving about in the air in a wonderful awful manner; and then his congregation would groan, and sigh, and look exceeding moved; anon he would call them the vilest names he could lay his tongue to, and bid them repent of their sins quickly, or every one of them should suffer the horridest torment that ever was endured; and then there was amongst them the making of such solemn faces, and such turning up of their eyes to the ceiling as was quite pitiful to look upon.

Upon the entering of Master Shakspeare and his young friend they were regarded by such of the assembled puritans as could get sight of them, with the gloomiest scowling glances ever seen—mayhap taking them for some idle gallants who only came to make sport: but when that they had noticed Master Francis's pale and melancholy aspect, still looking to be infinitely uneasy, and turned from him to gaze on his companion, who had put on him as long a face as any there, they thought not they could have any such intention. Still some continued to watch them very suspiciously. Master Francis, as hath been said, was becoming monstrously uneasy. He had heard old Lather point out the preacher as Holdfast, and at the first glance he liked him not at all. His appearance and manner were too repulsive for him to anticipate he should find in him that affection for which his heart yearned. At the conclusion of his sermon the preacher made a powerful appeal to his auditors on behalf of certain persons he styled "the suffering saints," who were, in fact, divers puritan divines who had been mulcted or imprisoned by the government; and with sundry famous arguments held forth the necessity of each contributing according to his means, toward the acquiring for them such assistance as their necessities demanded. Then descending from his elevation, he took his hat and went round with it among the congregation. Some put in it a groat, some a sixpence, some a shilling, and others what they could, and then went their way.

Master Francis trembled when Holdfast approached him. He felt some fear of he knew scarce what. He had listened and had observed attentively, and he fancied, from what he had noticed, that there could be no affection in one so severe as he seemed. Indeed, he began to doubt the other would even acknowledge him. Neither had Master Shakspeare been an inattentive spectator; but his scrutiny was assisted by a more perfect knowledge of character than was possessed by Master Francis. As the preacher came nearer, Master Shakspeare noticed his features more closely. From the impudent expression of the eyes, the extended nostril, and large mouth, he suspected him to be nothing better than an unreclaimed profligate. The look of sanctity imposed not on him. He saw that the countenance before him was one the comeliness whereof had been spoiled by riotous ill-living. The skin was coarse, of a purplish hue on the cheeks, and had the wrinkles and the crowsfoot famously conspicuous. It was plain such a father would do no credit to his young friend;

indeed, had not the latter seemed so confident of it, he should have doubted there was any relationship betwixt them. Notwithstanding of what he thought, he had made up his mind how he should act.

It so happened that Holdfast did not come to old Lather and his companions till nearly all of his congregation had taken their departures. Upon seeing of what he took to be two gallants, he looked upon them with a sort of sneer, yet presently put his hat before Master Shakspeare, who, taking out his purse, dropped among the contributions of the others, a ryal of Henry the Eighth. At the sight of the gold, the yellow eyeballs of the puritan did glisten again.

"Here is another for my friend," said Master Shakspeare, dropping a second into the hat, "and heartily do we both wish the suffering saints out of the power of their tyrannical persecutors."

"I thank you in their names—and the Lord thanketh you also," replied Holdfast looking wonderfully gracious. "Verily, I took you to be of the ungodly, for the vanity of your apparelling did mislead me."

"Indeed, worthy sir, it hath misled you hugely," observed the barber-chirurgeon. "These be two very honorable gentlemen of my acquaintance, who, repenting of the blindness in which they have lived, are desirous of entering into our community, that they might profit by the discourses of such an absolute searcher of hearts as yourself; therefore have I brought them here—for is it not written in Aristotle"——

"Mind not the heathen," said the preacher, with a monstrous grave face, interrupting old Lather in his speech. "Speak ye of any written thing, let it be the word of the Lord: for therein lieth all comfortable knowledge, and all understanding worthy to be known of the faithful."

"Could I and my friend have private speech with you, worthy sir," said Master Shakspeare to Holdfast. "I doubt not 'twould be to the wonderful comforting of our disturbed spirits; for what we have heard this day, so ably delivered as it was, hath come home to us. Your marvellous eloquence hath touched us mightily. We can not help wishing to be of the flock of so truly admirable a shepherd."

"Verily, I am in the Lord's hands," replied the preacher, with his usual nasal twang, as he lifted up his eyes to the ceiling. "What I have is of his giving; what I do is of his performance."

"Should you bestow on us your invaluable counsel, you would not find us ungrateful for your pious office:" and here Master Shakspeare, as if by accident, jingled his purse, which the puritan knew to be well filled, by the sound of it.

"Wait you but till I dismiss the congregation, with the Lord's help, I will give you whatever consolation you stand in need of." The preacher then went round to such as remained, and after the barber-chirurgeon had taken his leave of them, Master Shakspeare and his young friend were led into a little room adjoining the chamber used as a chapel, where there was a bottle of wine and a pasty on the table, as if waiting to be partaken of. Master Francis took a seat. He was in such a state of anxiety he could say nothing. He felt that the crisis was approaching that was to determine his future happiness or misery.

"It is the Lord's work," observed the puritan, as he was placing the money out of his hat into a bag, the which he seemed to do with an infinite satisfaction. "It is the Lord's work, and blessed be the name of the Lord. He hath sent you unto me to be his instrument for withdrawing you from the ways of perdition to enter into the paths of holiness. Verily you have determined on a wise thing. Join the brethren. Fly from the allurements of the devil, and the lusts of the flesh. There is no peace out of our holy assembly. Fly from false teachers, and ignorant villanous pretenders to be of God's high ministry. I that am but as a worm like to be trodden under foot, by the influence of an especial grace have become a light among the Gentiles. I will lead you out of your darkness—I will"——

"Dost think any one can overhear us?" inquired Master Shakspeare, going close up to Holdfast and interrupting him in the midst of his preaching.

"There be none nigh enough," replied the other, seeming somewhat surprised at hearing of such a question. Master Shakspeare again produced his purse, which he laid on the table. The preacher stared at the gold with an exceeding avaricious eye, yet did he look as if he marvelled in some measure.

"Let us understand each other," added Master Shakspeare. "The contents of that purse are yours on condition you answer truly such questions as I shall put to you. Be assured, that although they relate to yourself, you shall receive no hurt amongst your friends by the faith-

fulness of your replies; but the rather expect to have such ruin brought upon you as the exposure of your early life must needs produce, speak you not honestly and to the purpose. I ask not out of any idle curiosity, believe me; but for a good and honorable end, which, if I find it necessary, you shall know of." The puritan listened with a countenance of wonder, not unmixed with some dread. Master Francis attended with an increasing anxiousness.

"You are called Tribulation Holdfast?" said Master Shakspeare.

"That be my name beyond all doubt," replied the preacher.

"Is not your proper name Francis Holdfast?" inquired his interrogator.

"When I was one of the ungodly I was known by such a name," replied the other.

"By such a name you were known at least some twenty years since?"

"Ay, that was I."

"Remember you about that time being acquainted with a young female, to avoid a marriage with whom you went to the wars?"

The puritan hesitated awhile, but his eyes happening to light upon the purse on the table, he presently answered, "I do remember me something of it."

"Were you married to her at any time?" inquired Master Shakspeare, fixing on the other a very searching glance.

"No—that was I not at any time," replied Holdfast. Upon hearing which Master Francis did utter a sudden groan, and covered his face with his hands.

"The birth of a child was the consequence of your intimacy with her?" continued Master Shakspeare. The preacher again paused before he would answer.

"Verily I was then among the backsliders," replied he at last very demurely. "I was sorely tempted of the devil, and fell headlong into the snare: but lo! the Lord hath disentangled me—He hath raised me up—He hath"——

"Died not the mother soon after?" inquired Master Shakspeare, interrupting the other with very little ceremony. Whether Holdfast liked not to confess the truth is not known; but he delayed answering of the question so long that it was repeated with a look and manner that did command attention.

"She died within a short time of its birth," answered Holdfast, with something of a tremor in his voice, and a look that showed he was ashamed to make the acknowledgment. Master Francis sat trembling like a condemned criminal.

"Know you what became of the child?" asked Master Shakspeare. The puritan again hesitated, but observing from the severe scrutiny of his gaze that his interrogator would have an answer, he replied in more evident confusion, "She lieth buried with her mother at St. Mary Overy."

"Ha! ha! ha!" screamed Master Francis, as he started up of a sudden with a look of frantic exultation, and ran and shook Holdfast heartily by the hand, as if he was the very dearest friend he had, though a moment since he would have shrunk from his touch. "You have saved me from the horriblest misery—I am indebted to you beyond all measure."

"The purse is yours, Master Holdfast," observed Master Shakspeare, almost in as great a delight as was his young friend, "I need ask you no more questions." The puritan stared at one and then at the other, believing both of them to be crazed; but he hesitated not in taking possession of the purse.

"We must now to your uncle's, Master Francis," said his friend, as they were making their way from Houndsditch. "It seemeth to me he hath been playing the villain with you."

"I will go wheresoever you please to lead," replied the other, in a famous cheerful humor. "Indeed, I feel so infinitely joyful at heart I have no care about anything." And this was exactly the case with him. In truth, Master Francis was of that nature—which be common enough in the young and imaginative—that he was ever jumping from one extreme to the other. What Sir Robert Cecil had said, had plunged him into a wonderful melancholy—the success of his play had delighted him beyond all measure—the sight of Joanna with Padre Bartolomé had filled him with a very monstrous uneasiness—the hearing he was sent for by the queen put him in so extreme a cheerfulness, he could do nothing but imagine the honorable things he expected would come of it—the gross insult she had put upon him before all her court, made him feel himself degraded into the lowest depths of shame—and the hope that his supposed father was of a reputable character—the fear he would not acknowledge him as his son—the dread he felt when he saw Holdfast and noticed what manner of man he was, and the delight he experienced upon finding that thorough hypo-

crite to be of no kin to him, were as powerful in their effects upon him, as sudden in their changes. Now all the weight of fear and the deep sense of shame which had laid so heavy on his spirit, appeared to be utterly cast off, and he again gave himself up to the indulgence of those ambitious and romantic dreams which, in early years, he had taken such huge delight in.

By this time they arrived at St. Mary Axe the evening was so far set in that the shops were closed, and many of the more industrious sort of citizens had retired to their beds. Master Shakspeare knocked at the house of Gregory Vellum several times before any sign appeared that it contained any living creature. The tenement seemed in a dreadful dilapidated condition, and the windows were covered with mud and dirt, having most of the glass broken, with the holes in some places stuffed with old dirty rags. At last a casement was thrown up, and, by the light of the stars, Master Francis and his companion observed the old scrivener looking cautiously out of it, projecting before him the barrel of a rusty harquebus.

"What want you, knocking so loud at this late hour?" inquired the old miser in his shrill treble.

"It is I, uncle," replied his nephew. "I would fain have speech with you on a matter of some importance to me."

"Uncle, me no uncles!" exclaimed Gregory Vellum querulously. "I know you not. Get you gone quickly."

"Open the door to us on the instant! We have pressing business with you!" cried Master Shakspeare.

"I will open my doors to none," answered the other. "Mayhap you be thieves, as I do indeed suspect you of being."

"I assure you, we are nothing of the sort," said Master Shakspeare. "I have come here with Master Francis, your nephew, to hear some certain intelligence concerning of his father."

"Get you gone for a couple of knaves!" cried the old man sharply. "You be thieves out of all doubt, I will fire on you stay you at my door any longer."

"Open the door, you old fool!" exclaimed Master Shakspeare, getting to be somewhat out of temper. "I do insist upon your giving us the information we need of you, else shall you presently repent it."

"Watch! Watch! Here be villains a breaking into my house. Watch, I say. Come quickly, or I shall be spoiled and undone!" Bawling this as loudly, as he could, Gregory Vellum banged down the casement, and left the two friends no wiser than they came.

"If you be true men, stand!" exclaimed a rough voice close at their elbow, and on turning round they observed one of the city watch—a famous stupid-looking pudding-headed sort of a fellow, coming up to them, holding of his bill in his hand in such a manner as showed some intention of making their bodies acquainted with it. "I charge you stand in the queen's name. I apprehend you as vagrom men, going upon exceeding dissolute courses, and will straightway bring you before Master Constable to give an account of yourselves. Come on in peaceable fashion like well-behaved villains, as I doubt not to find you, else will I raise my brethren of the watch, besides giving you some terrible wounds with my bill. It be flat felony to resist one of the watch. You can not escape hanging for it. Come on, then, in the queen's name."

"You bade us stand in the queen's name but this moment," replied Master Shakspeare very gravely, and moving not a foot. "Therefore will we stand till doomsday like true men, as we are."

"Nay, that be against the law," cried the other authoritatively. "No vagrom men must be allowed to stand when they be told to move on, nor move on when they be told to stand, for so saith Master Constable, who knoweth the law better than any man in our ward. I charge you, first of all, to stand, if you be true men"——

"And I charge you, next of all, to run away if you be a villain!" answered Master Shakspeare, quickly drawing of his rapier; at the sight of which the other left his speech unfinished, and took to running away as fast as he could, bawling murder with all the strength of his lungs. Scarce had Master Shakspeare had his laugh out, and put up his weapon, when he noticed the same man coming toward him with some five or six of his brethren of the watch.

"There be the villains, Master Constable!" cried he. "I caught them about to break into a house, and upon charging of them to stand, one did draw his tool upon me, and would have done me some deadly hurt, had I not showed what speed of foot I had."

"That be murder with intent to kill; or manslaughter at the least," observed

one of his companions, a fat old fellow with a famous red nose, and a marvellous grave countenance.

"Let us be upon them, else will they escape, Neighbor Braddle," bawled one into his ear, as if the old fellow was deaf.

"If we stab them with our bills and they die of it shall they have their action of battery upon us?" asked another in a loud voice.

"No, for we shall have the law on our sides," replied he that was called Braddle. "If you kill a man in the execution of your duty he shall not have his action against you—that is, if he resist none. If he do not resist and you kill him, he shall be entitled to have you cast for the murder."

"Then, methinks, it be best to meddle not with these," remarked a third. "Perchance we might come but badly off, Master Constable?"

"So stands the law," said Neighbor Braddle, with as much of the look of an oracle as he could put on him. "If we kill them, save upon resistance to our authorities, we shall be judged to be malefactors, and not get off without hanging."

"What, if they kill us?" inquired one.

"Then shall we have the law on our sides, and may kill them again," answered the other.

"But I like not being killed, I promise you, Neighbor Braddle," observed his companion with an inconceivable serious look.

"Let us speak them fair," said another. "Mayhap we shall be able to lay hold on them without a brawl."

"It shall be done," answered the constable. "I will to them myself." Thereupon, he and his companions walked up to Master Shakspeare and his friend, who had been so amused with what the others had said, whereof they had heard every word in consequence of their talking so loud, that both stayed to see what would come of it.

"My masters," exclaimed the constable, presenting himself before them with a famous consequential look, whilst his brethren of the watch kept close upon his heels. "On your allegiance, stir not; as you are true men, answer what I ask of you; and as you hope to be saved, speak up, for I be monstrous hard of hearing."

"What would you do with us honest men?" inquired Master Shakspeare; but he had scarce let the words out of his mouth, when he found himself firmly seized by two of the watch, and at the same time two others had fast hold on Master Francis.

"If you resist us it be lawful to make an end of you," cried one.

"Hold them fast, neighbor, for they be such thorough rogues, I doubt not they would escape if they could," said the first.

"Now I look on you closer," observed the constable, poking his red nose as near as he might to the faces of his prisoners, who held themselves very quiet. "Now I look on you closer, two such absolute cut-throats never saw I in my days."

"Especially he with the villanous high forehead," exclaimed another.

"I pretend not to know aught of reading or writing," remarked a third; "but hanging be written so plain on the countenance of that varlet that methinks none need learn his horn-book to find it out."

"I doubt not but that this be as great a villain as the other," observed one of his companions, who had hold on Master Francis. "Indeed, if I be not hugely deceived, I have already had him in custody for cutting of a purse."

"For all their fine apparelling, I know them to be the very rascallest pair of knights of the post that live," cried another.

"It be plain, then, that you are the villains I took you to be," said Master Constable, looking upon the prisoners with extreme severity. "Now, answer me, as you wish to escape hanging—carry you any money in your purses?"

"I have neither money nor purse," replied Master Shakspeare.

"Dost think to escape hanging, varlet, and have no money?" exclaimed the other, sharply; "O' my life you be the shockingest villain I have met with this many a day."

"It be plain they be vagrom men," cried the first, "for it be well known of all, vagrom men be a horrible pennyless set."

"*I* have money, Master Constable," exclaimed Master Francis.

"There be some hope of you," quickly replied Neighbor Braddle: "saving that you have fallen into abominable bad company, I would not utter a word to your disparagement. I doubt not it will be found upon inquiry you be a youth of a very marvellous honesty. Let me have the keeping of your money, honest youth, else it will stand a good chance of being stolen."

"I thank you, I would rather keep it myself," answered Master Francis.

"Out on you for a hardened young villain!" cried the other, looking exceeding wrath. "There can be no doubt of your being a couple of as infamous cutpurses as ever were put in the compter. Bring them along, neighbor Sheepface—to prison with them—they can not help swinging for't."

Master Shakspeare and his young friend were dragged along the whole length of the street, and they began to think their situation somewhat unpleasant. They attempted to remonstrate with their captors upon the wrong they were doing, in hurrying to prison persons of their respectability for committing of no offence, and threatened them with the severest penalties of the law, were they not released on the instant; but they received nothing but abuse in reply. They had scarce got into the next street when the whole party were met by four young men, who were coming along singing and caterwauling, and making of such a terrible racket, that some of the citizens were seen in their nightcaps looking out of window, to know what horrible noise it was.

"By Gog and Magog, Big Jack o' the Turnstile, here be two honest gentlemen in custody of the watch!" cried a well-known voice, as he approached within sight of them. "To the rescue, Peter Perriwinkle!—to the rescue, Long-legged Tom!—they be my true friends," shouted Harry Daring, as he recognised who they were. In a minute all four hurried toward the spot, evidently in that state in which legions of watch would have been cared for but little. "Ha! what Barnaby Braddle!" exclaimed Harry, in some sort of astonishment, as he stood before Master Constable; "I take *that* for old acquaintance sake!" and the next moment Barnaby Braddle measured his length on the ground, knocked on the pate by his own bill, which Harry had wrested from him.

This appeared to be the signal for a general fight. Master Shakspeare and his young friend were soon out of the hands of their captors, having each of them tripped up the heels of such of the watch as held them; and laying hold of the weapons of those who fell, they assisted Harry Daring and his companions with such good will, that in an exceeding brief space, their opponents took to their heels, or were laid with broken pates on the ground. However, the noise of the disturbance and the outcries of those who ran away, soon fetched such numbers of the city watch, that, for all that they fought with the most determined resoluteness, every one of them, Master Shakspeare and his party would have been overpowered, had not Harry Daring all at once raised the cry of "prentices! prentices! clubs! clubs!" in which he was so vigorously assisted by Big Jack o' the Turnstile, Long-legged Tom, and Peter Perriwinkle, that there presently were seen running in all directions some score of young men and boys, every one with a cudgel in his hand, who began laying about them so famously, it looked as if they were used to it. More of the watch continued to come, but the apprentices who had already taken part in the conflict soon drew such a number to their assistance, by shouting as loud as they could, "prentices! prentices! clubs! clubs!" that the street became filled with them and the watch to the amount of some hundreds, all fighting with one another as fiercely as dragons, with such furious outcries, that it brought the citizens, frightened out of their wits, to their windows.

It can not be doubted but that Harry Daring was in the thickest of the fray. Indeed, though he got a few famous thumps from the bills of his opponents, he ceased not till he and his companions had driven them to seek safety in flight; and after seeing of Master Shakspeare to his lodgings, and bidding good-night to his old school-fellows, he went home with Master Francis, overjoyed that he had again participated in such "exquisite fine fun," as he had ever found in beating of the watch.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

What things have we seen
Done at THE MERMAID: heard words that have been
So nimble, and so full of subtle flame,
As if that every one from whence they came
Had meant to put his whole wit in a jest!
BEAUMONT.

But that which most doth take my Muse and me,
Is a pure cup of rich Canary wine,
Which is THE MERMAID'S now—but shall be mine;
Of which had Horace or Anacreon tasted,
Their lives, as do their lines, till now had lasted.
BEN JONSON.

Come, let us go while we are in our prime,
And take the harmless folly of the time.
HERRICK.

THE next day Master Shakspeare proceeded, with Master Francis to the scrivener's, determined, if it were possible, to

make the old miser declare what he knew of his young friend's parentage: but Gregory Vellum was obstinate, nay, quite rude on the matter. He would have it he knew no more than he had already said; and could not be ever a wasting of his time in answering questions concerning the birth of one that was base born. In vain his nephew implored him to say all that he was acquainted with; he only laughed at his prayers, and bade him about his business; in vain Master Shakspeare threatened him with legal proceedings told he not the truth: he set him at defiance, and accused them both of coming to him with no better purpose than to extort money. After receiving from him nothing but abuse, and finding he could not be brought, either by threats, or bribes, or entreaties, to declare any one thing, they, with a very evident reluctance, took themselves away. Master Francis now found that his birth was involved in as much obscurity as ever; yet as he was not deprived of hope, he was less uneasy on the subject than he had been a long time. It was a great relief the getting rid of all idea of relationship with that wretched hypocrite Holdfast. Could he as perfectly convince himself of his own legitimacy as he could that he was no son of that man, he would have cared but little. Even were his father some honest poor man, he would now be satisfied, provided he had been bound in marriage with his mother. In fine, he felt he could humble his ambition to any lowness, to secure his mother's honor from suspicion.

The success of his play, for it seemed to take with the town more and more every day, set him to the writing of other things, and he began to be considered of the critics one of the most promising poets of the time. Save Master Shakspeare, none exhibited such interest in the success of his writings as did Sir Walter Raleigh. He had been delighted with the tragedy, and took every occasion to bring the young author into notice amongst such of his friends and acquaintances as possessed rank or influence. What had passed betwixt his secretary and Queen Elizabeth had vexed him as much as the knowledge that the youth was in no way related to such a paltry cheater as he had known that Holdfast to be, had given him pleasure. His own affairs looked not to be in the most flourishing condition. At the earnest solicitations of his devoted wife he had strove to the utmost to get himself restored to the queen's favor; but, as Cecil insinuated, my Lord Essex and his friends had such influence at court as prevented all approach to a reconciliation with her majesty, though he was unceasing in his efforts to bring it about. For all this the queen did often send him comfortable messages, which did give him some hope he should make his peace with her before long. An expedition against the Spaniards had been talked of, and though it met not with the approbation of her lord-treasurer, who liked not anything that cost much money, and seemed to be attended with more risk than profit; as it was warmly supported by the lord-admiral and my Lord Essex, it was thought, among those supposed to be in the secret, my Lord Burghley's opinion would go for naught. The expedition had been originally proposed by Sir Walter Raleigh, some years since; and as the queen had lately sent frequently to consult him on the matter, Dame Elizabeth did imagine he would have some command in it; and this thought of hers pleased her mightily, for she did argue from it he would have such opportunity for distinguishing of himself as must needs end in his being restored to the honorable place he had lost by his marriage with her.

"Put you on your hat and cloak, Master Francis, and come with me," said Sir Walter to his secretary, as they sat together, after the labors of the day were ended, in the library at Durham house, that was in the turret overlooking the Thames, "I wish you to meet certain friends of mine, in whose society I doubt not you will find infinite pleasure."

Master Francis was not long in complying with his patron's request, and shortly afterward they walked out together till they came to a tavern of excellent great repute, called "The Mermaid," in Friday street. It seemed to be a goodly structure, being of some size, with a famous porch in the centre, having casements from the ground floor projecting into the street further than the ordinary, each story above story, with quaint carvings round about them, and a huge sign over the door, representing a mermaid in the sea, daintily combing of her hair with one hand, and having a looking-glass in the other, into which she appeared to be gazing. There were two or three gentlemanlike men loitering about the entrance, conversing with each other.

"Ha! Master Donne!" exclaimed Sir Walter, cordially greeting a young man,

dressed very soberly, yet of a simple good-natured countenance. "How goeth the world with you?"

"Indeed, it goeth but ill with me, Sir Walter," replied he, "yet why should I repine? It be true enough, I have lost most of my property; yet my dear wife hath been restored to me. Methinks I should be exceeding content."

"I hope all will end happily at last," remarked Raleigh. Now the reader must know that this Master Donne having been secretary to a certain Lord Elsinore, with whom he had travelled in Spain and Italy, fell in love with my lord's niece, who was the daughter of Sir George More, and upon finding they were both of one mind, privately married her; which did so enrage her father when he came to know of it, that he took away his wife from him, had him dismissed from his office of secretary, and then cast him into prison. He got his liberty presently; but he got not his wife again till he had recourse to law proceedings with his father-in-law, that nearly consumed all his substance.

"My kinsman, Sir Francis Whalley, with whom I am living, is exercising of his best means to get Sir George to be reconciled to me," added Master Donne. "I know not what will come of it, but will hope for the best. Then there hath been my true friend, Dr. Morton, that very excellent and truly good divine, advising me to enter into the church, and offering me a benefice if I would."

"And surely you will do as he advises you, the more especially as your fortune is so low?" remarked Sir Walter.

"Indeed, I can not," replied the other. "'Tis a great temptation at this time certainly, the offer of a fair benefice when I have nothing to look to, and a sweet young wife to provide for; but I have such scruples against entering the priesthood, because I am not of that holy disposition methinks it should require, that I can not bring my conscience to the doing of any such thing."

"O' my life! I do most truly believe you would do the church infinite honor in becoming one of its members," said Raleigh. "I wish all were as conscientious and as worthy." Then turning to another he exclaimed, with a like cordial manner as he had used to Master Donne —"And how speedeth Master Cotton in his labors? Hast found any more rare manuscripts and ancient records, such as your laudable industry hath already put you upon the discovery of?"

"Indeed have I, Sir Walter," replied he, who was one of a famous staid demeanor, and in great repute for his knowledge of, and eagerness after, all manner of ancient things. "I have had the good hap to get hold of a marvellous number of such wonderful, curious, and valuable manuscripts, charters, records, and the like precious documents, as scarce any in these kingdoms have met with, the which I shall be proud to show you, call you on me at any time."

"I will not fail to pay you a visit soon," answered Sir Walter. "Master Selden—well met!" exclaimed he to another—"And Master Martin too," he added to a fourth. "Pray tell me who are come?"

"There are Master Beaumont and Master Fletcher," said one.

"Arcades ambo!" cried Raleigh laughingly.

"Methinks they be the very 'Gemini' of our literary zodiac," observed Master Martin in a like humor. "They look to be ever so closely coupled."

"Then there have lately gone up Master Shakspeare and Master Jonson," added another.

"If Beaumont and Fletcher be 'Gemini,'" said Master Selden, "surely Shakspeare and Jonson be 'Pisces;' for, o' my life, never saw I such fish for drinking!" Thereupon there was a laugh among them all.

"Not a long while since Master Carew passed me, and went in," remarked Master Donne.

"Doubtless inventing of some new ballad," said Master Cotton, "with such a monstrous fire of love in it as might dissolve all the ice between this and the Frozen ocean."

"Master Constable and Master Sylvester are also there," added another.

"Master Sylvester came before the other in a monstrous haste," observed Master Selden in the same merry humor. "But that can be nothing out of the ordinary; for he be famous for outrunning the constable."

"Well, let us up and join them, my masters!" exclaimed Sir Walter, laughing with the rest; upon which the whole party moved on through the spacious doorway with its fantastic carvings about it, passing a notable fat landlady in the passage, who left off rating one of the drawers to drop her guests a courtesy, and make some courteous inquiry, as every one said a civil word before they went up stairs. As they were entering the room

above, they heard such shouts of laughter as showed plain enough there was no lack of good humor among the company; and so it appeared, for upon their coming in they noticed that every one was laughing as heartily as he might; and Master Shakspeare and one of a right merry aspect, whom Master Francis knew to be Ben Jonson, were in the midst of them, evidently causing all the mirth they had heard. The room was long, and of a fair height, having a long old oak table with rounded legs put in the centre, on which a drawer appeared to be setting things ready for supper. The compartments in the wainscot were elaborately carved with all manner of foliage and griffins' heads; and the chimney, which was of a more than ordinary height and capaciousness, was ornamented in a like manner. There was an open cupboard on one side, in which was a rare display of glass and china, and one or two parcel-gilt goblets; and a goodly silver tankard, curiously wrought with a scene of persons going a hawking; and the tapestry round the room was worked with rude designs descriptive of the destruction of the Spanish armada, with labels coming out the mouths of the principal commanders in the ships, saying of certain things attributed to them.

Master Francis upon first coming in did as he saw others do, put his hat upon a peg, and then turned to see who was of the company. Most of them he knew; for they were the chiefest wits of the time, that he had often met in the chamber of the players, and these greeted him kindly. Whilst looking about him, he could not help observing the drawer, who was a youth marvellous spare of flesh, with long legs and long arms, in a white canvass doublet and saffron-colored hose, and an exceeding innocent countenance, in which the sense of respect for the company in which he was, seemed to be having a sore struggle with the desire to laugh at the right admirable jests that ever and anon broke from one or other of them.

"Here cómeth our king of El Dorado!" exclaimed Ben Jonson good-humoredly, as he noticed the entrance of Sir Walter Raleigh and those who came with him. "Mayhap we shall have something sterling now. O' my life! I be wonderful like good money kept with bad. Methinks, by this time, I must needs have so suspicious a look with me, on account of the rubs I am getting among these base ones, that I can not help being thought as brass as my company."

"Verily, thy company be brazen enough, of all conscience," replied Master Shakspeare in a like tone and manner. "I will put thee up to a good thing, Ben. When the next lord mayor's day comes round, offer for a reasonable sum to play the part of one of the men in armor. Nature hath provided thee with such a complete suit of brass, thou art sure to be able to do it cheaper and more to the life than any."

"Away with thee!—thy wit be all of a quality with thyself!" cried the other, whilst his companion laughed as loud as the rest. "Not only art thou brazen beyond all denial, but thou art a very brazen bull of Phalaris; for thou dost 'roar' at the expense of thy victims."

"I'faith be I the bull of Phalaris, thou must needs be the Colossus of Rhodes," replied Master Shakspeare. "Mayhap it would be greatly to somebody's profit, who would break thee up and sell thee by weight, as was done with that ancient image. But heard I not that the worshipful company of braziers had made thee a handsome offer at so much per pound, wishing to melt thee into candlesticks, hand-irons, stew-pans and the like famous utensils? I hope 'tis true, for thou wouldst then come to a goodly use, which be more than I can hope of thee at present."

"Oh! would I had the *lapis philosophicus*," exclaimed Ben Jonson, "I would, with what speed I might, transmute the abominable baseness of thy humor into something more creditable to thee."

"Use it on thyself, Ben, I prythee, for thou wilt find it more to thy profit," answered the other, laughingly. "Had such transmutation been done, and thou hadst been one of the children of Israel that were hastening away from Pharaoh, there would have been no occasion for them to have melted the trinkets they had filched from the Egyptians."

"And why not, my Œdipus?" asked his companion.

"Because they would have had a golden calf ready at their hands," replied Master Shakspeare. At this the company laughed louder than ever, and the drawer turned his head on one side, to hide the grin that made its appearance on his countenance.

"Well, my masters," exclaimed Sir Walter Raleigh, fearing that the liveliness of their wits might, if not interrupted, lead them to loggerheads, "there can be no doubt you are both 'men of

metal;' and if the nature thereof hath an inclination for the brazen, 'Corinthian brass' it must be at the least."

"That is a pretty compliment, o' my word," cried Master Cotton, "and in honest truth I take them to be of such choice metal, if brass they be, that had they lived in Rome, under either its consuls or emperors, I doubt not at all they would both have been coined into 'asses.'"

"Nay, hang it, Master Cotton!" exclaimed Master Shakspeare, good-humoredly, "travel not so far as Rome to make asses of us. I would take no such trouble in such a case, I promise you; for were I so inclined, I see no reason for doubting I could make an ass of you on the spot." Thereupon the laugh was as general as ever, and the drawer put his hand to his mouth to prevent others from seeing he could not avoid joining in it.

"Barnaby!" cried Ben Jonson, winking at some of those around him, as if to intimate to them what he would be at, "what hast got for supper?"

In a moment the drawer had on him as grave a face as ever was met with in a drawer, and gazing steadily on his fingers, he began with the finger and thumb of his right hand to touch the points of the thumb and fingers of the other, as he slowly named the following dishes:—

"Turkey pullets, venison pasty, two roasted capons, cold"——

"Art sure they be capons, Barnaby?" inquired one, interrupting him.

"Ay, master," replied he, "brave capons, I promise you."

"Art cock sure on't?" asked another.

"Ay, master," answered the drawer.

"Now how canst pretend to be cock-sure on a matter of capons?" said the first, with an infinite gravity. Barnaby scratched his head and looked puzzled, and the rest took the question very merrily, as may be supposed.

"Well, and what else hast got for supper?" asked Master Shakspeare. The drawer again, with a monstrous serious countenance, began counting of his fingers as, with the same voice and manner, he repeated the following list of good things:—

"Turkey pullets, venison pasty, two roasted capons, cold sirloin of beef"——

"Dost not think the sirloin would have been all the better had it been hot?" asked Ben Jonson, very earnestly.

"Mayhap it would, master," replied Barnaby, with a wonderful innocency; "yet I know not for certain. Peradventure asked I about it of mistress, she could say."

"It matters not—proceed with what you were stating," said the other.

Again Barnaby took to the counting of his fingers, and the naming of the dishes, with more steadfast a gravity than ever,—beginning as at first:—

"Turkey pullets, venison pasty, two roasted capons, cold sirloin of beef, boiled coneys, stewed lampreys." Here he made a stop, and seemed to think very intently for a minute or so; then began counting of his fingers again—after he had counted out the left hand, making use of it to count the right with, and renamed what he had mentioned in a lower voice, as if it was to himself.—"Turkey pullets, venison pasty, two roasted capons, cold sirloin of beef, boiled coneys, stewed lampreys—stewed lampreys—stewed lampreys," repeated he, looking from his fingers to the ceiling with a stare so wondrous hard, every one supposed he saw there something marvellous. "Stewed lampreys—odds pittikins! now my memory will not serve me to name what cometh after the stewed lampreys, though I said all the dishes to mistress not an hour since." None interrupted him, though every one looked to be exceeding inclined to laugh, he appeared to be so famously perplexed; but many could keep their gravity no longer when they observed him, though he spoke not, evidently from the moving of his lips repeating what he had already said, as with a gravity mixed with some little furiousness, he once more took to the counting of his fingers. "Boar's head!" shouted he at last, amid the boisterous laughter of all present. "Alack that I should forget the boar's head!" Then he continued as intent upon his fingers as ever. "Boar's head, marrow pudding, two dishes of roast apple-johns, three of stewed prunes, and a custard with plums in it."

"It be plain enough, Barnaby, thou wilt not have to go far to bring us our supper," observed Master Beaumont.

"No farther than the kitchen, master," replied the drawer very innocently.

"Surely there can be no occasion for your going to the kitchen," said Master Beaumont. "It seemed but now you had it all at your 'finger's ends.'" Amid the laughter which followed this, the voice of a woman was heard crying out, "Barnaby!" as loud as she could.

"Anon, mistress!" replied he.

"How long hast been a drawer, Barnaby?" asked Ben Jonson.

"A year since Pentecost, master," answered he.

"Barnaby! Why, thou idle varlet!" screamed the voice from the bottom of the stairs.

"Anon, anon, mistress!" cried Barnaby, evidently anxious to get away.

"Dost like thy business?" asked the other.

"Ay, marry do I, master," answered the drawer, looking toward the door as if in some dread his mistress would be coming.

"Prythee tell me what dost get by thy business?" inquired Ben Jonson with an infinite seriousness, as if the question was one of great moment.

"Twenty good shillings a year, besides vails; and"——

"Barnaby! Barnaby! Thou knave, must I bawl here all day?" shouted the hostess.

"Anon! anon, mistress!" cried he again with his countenance in some alarm; and then added hurriedly, "and a suit at Lammas and Shrovetide."

"Prythee detain him no longer, Master Jonson," said Sir Walter, though he could not help laughing at the anxiety of the drawer to attend to his mistress, whilst he seemed fearful of taking himself away from his interrogator too quickly, from the likelihood there appeared in it of giving him offence. "Let him to his duty; else shall we have Dame Cannikin so put out, our supper may chance to suffer for it."

"Nay, I would not allow of our supper suffering on any account," replied Ben Jonson laughingly, as the drawer made his escape.

"How tender of heart thou art!" exclaimed Master Shakspeare. "But for all thy fine professions, I doubt not in the least thou wouldst act toward it the part of the wolf to the lamb—thou wouldst make a meal of it."

"I own that be my intention," said Ben Jonson, joining in the mirth that then became general. "There is some likelihood of its suffering from me to some extent, after that fashion; for at present I must plead guilty to a cruel appetite."

"At present!" cried Shakspeare with marked emphasis. "Certes, it be modest of thee to speak but of 'the present' in relation to thy appetite; for thou remindest me of a certain mælstrom I have heard of, which be ever at work swallowing all things that come within its reach."

"It be a thousand pities thou hast never gone that way," observed the other. "But I forgot. There are some people that an old proverb declareth will never be drowned."

It is probable some reply of a like nature with what had been already said by these two of one another, would have been spoken by Master Shakspeare; but at that moment, evidently to the huge satisfaction of the company, the door opened, and there entered no other than Mistress Cannikin herself, carrying of a dish of roast capons, which she placed on one end of the table. Master Francis, when he passed her in the passage, fancied he had had sight of her portly person and fair florid face before, and now, on a more careful scrutiny he, to his no small surprise, recognised her as the famous fat dame, that with her equally fat daughter, had been in the room with him at the playhouse at the first playing of his tragedy. She was, on this occasion, apparelled very stately in a dress of flame-colored taffeta, cut low, and with a monstrous fine ruff to it, wearing a goodly bunch of keys at her girdle, besides a pair of scissors and a pincushion. After her came her daughter with another dish, who was decked out as daintily as her mother, in a dress of the same material; which made Ben Jonson, as he saw the two coming along enveloped in the steam of the dishes they carried, call them personifications of the destruction of Pompeii and Herculaneum. Next to mine hostess's daughter came Barnaby, then another drawer, then a tall stout woman with a countenance that outflamed the taffeta—then a clumsy scrub of a girl with a black face and red elbows—and then a still greater scrub of a boy scarce half her size, in a leather jerkin a mile and all too big for him,—all bearing in their hands dishes as much as they could carry.

"Now, Kate!" exclaimed Dame Cannikin addressing all of them in turn; "put you the turkey pullets in the centre.—Barnaby! lay the boar's head at the top of the table, where the noble Sir Walter Raleigh is used to sit. Humphrey! the venison pastry here for Master Shakspeare. Mary Cook! the boiled coneys on this side. Dorothy! the stewed lampreys opposite. Dick Turnspit! the marrow puddings next the turkey pullets—and now get you gone all of you for the rest of the things, whilst I fetch the tank-

arks and glasses from the cupboard." Whereupon all departed, after placing the things as she directed, saying never a word, and presently returned with what else was intended for the supper, as she got what she wanted from the cupboard. During this time her guests were placing of themselves at the table, where every man found his knife and his napkin ready for him, Master Francis being at the right hand of Sir Walter and Ben Jonson on the left—Master Shakspeare at the other end having Beaumont on one side and Fletcher on the other, and the rest of the party sitting themselves on each side of the table as they could.

Mine hostess, as she helped in putting everything in proper order, seemed to notice whatever was going on around her, and kept not her tongue still a moment; addressing one or other of her guests in some courteous speech, or rating the drawers, or apologising for whatever she thought was deficient in the serving of the supper.

"Good Master Donne, I am heartily glad to see you," she exclaimed. "You have been a stranger of late."

"Much against my will, depend on't, fair hostess," replied he.

"Then, forsooth, yon are not to blame," added she. "Worthy Master Cotton, you are welcome as a rasher of bacon in peascod time. Kate! dip not your sleeves in the stewed lampreys. *There* lieth the carver, noble Sir Walter, by the side of the dish! By my troth, Mary Cook hath forgot to put the lemon in the boar's mouth. Go you and get a lemon, Barnaby! Sweet Master Shakspeare, I live in hope the pastry will be to your liking."

"Where the hostess is so greatly to my liking, what is of her providing must needs be as desirable," answered the other gallantly.

"La, forsooth, Master Shakspeare!" exclaimed she, looking exceeding pleased. "Well, for a prettily spoken gentleman never met I your peer."

"Wilt say grace, Master Shakspeare?" inquired Sir Walter from the other end of the table.

"Nay it be useless asking of him," cried Ben Jonson. "For he be the most notorious *grace-less* varlet that lives."

"O' my life, he cares only to avoid saying it himself," replied Master Shakspeare, in a like jocular manner. "For there can not be in this world so infamous a '*scape-grace*." After the laugh had subsided which followed these witty sayings, the latter, with a monstrous serious face, repeated the following couplet:—

"With these good things before our sights,
Grant us, good Lord, good appetites."

"Mayhap, if our commons were to become as short as our grace, our appetites would stand but a poor chance of being satisfied," said Master Selden.

"Indeed, the grace be of a singular fine brevity," observed Mistress Cannikin, seating herself at the centre of the table, whilst her daughter placed herself opposite to her at the same time, as if they were accustomed to it. "But methinks it be all the better, for then shall the meat stand the less chance of getting cool. Now, Master Carew, let me help you to a leg of this coney," she added, as she began dividing the joints of it—still seeming to have her eyes everywhere, and talking by turns to all. "Please you, good Master Donne, to carve those turkey pullets. I pray you, worthy Master Cotton, look to the capons. Kate, serve you lampreys. Well, forsooth, if there be not Master Francis! I am right glad to see you at the Mermaid, sweet sir. You are heartily welcome, I assure you. Indeed, that was a most moving tragedy of yours. Sauce to your capon, Master Fletcher? I cried not so much any time since the day my last husband died. Take you no boar's head with your pullet, Master Beaumont? I pray you, what will you have, sweet Master Francis? Let me commend the pastry to you. Barnaby! prythee make more speed with Master Carew's trencher! Ah! thou awkward varlet, Humphrey! thou wert nigh spilling all the gravy upon the noble Sir Walter's ruff. Alack! Master Francis hath no bread! A manchet for Master Francis, Barnaby, on the instant! And how is the sweet young gentleman your friend, Master Francis, who spoke so commendably of you it did my heart good to hear him?"

Master Francis felt he would have given anything to have escaped her observation, for he thought it would draw on him the notice of others, but to his great relief he found the good dame waited not to have any of her many questions answered, for she went on talking without ceasing, and the company were too well employed to heed him.

"Shall I help you to some of this pastry, my fair hostess?" inquired Master Shakspeare.

"No, forsooth, kind sir, help yourself, I pray you," replied Mistress Cannikin, "you have not put bit in your mouth

yet. Noble Sir Walter, I hope the supper is of your liking? O' my life, these varlets of mine have forgot the ale! Haste, Barnaby, and draw it; and mind, secure the spigot. Kate! what wouldst have?"

"Indeed, la! I have no choice," drawled the girl, who appeared to be somewhat of a simpleton.

"Say you that to all, you will never get married, fair Kate," observed Master Shakspeare.

"Tilly vally! she will have choice enough I warrant me when the time comes!" exclaimed her mother, laughing till her fat cheeks seemed to shake like a jelly. "Sauce to your pullet, Master Jonson? Humphrey, you idle varlet, look to Master Jonson's trencher. Forsooth, if she taketh after her mother, her mind may soon be known when a husband be in the way, I promise you."

"Indeed, la! I care not for a husband," said Kate very demurely.

"Say that when thou hast one, wench. It will be soon enough to care not for one then, I warrant me," cried the hostess of the Mermaid, again shaking herself all over like a very aspen. "Noble Sir Walter! there is a right delicate wing of a capon on the dish. Master Cotton, I pray you prevail on Sir Walter. Lack you anything, Master Francis? The ale will be here anon. Humphrey, thou heedless caitiff! see'st thou not master Carew looking for the salt?"

"Can I not prevail on you, fair Kate?" inquired Master Shakspeare.

"If you be wise, let him not prevail on you, sweet Kate!" cried Ben Jonson laughingly.

"Heed him not, I pray you, sweet Kate," said Master Shakspeare, in a like humor. "He would do you some wrong if he could—not I, believe me; for it be well known of all men living he hath the very greediest tooth for 'sweet cates' of every kind."

"O' my life, Master Shakspeare, that be as good a thing as I have heard this many a day," exclaimed the portly dame, joining as heartily as any in the general laugh. "Sweet cates, forsooth! Barnaby! ale for Master Francis. It be a famous jest indeed. I pray you, Master Donne, stand not upon being asked for anything. A truly excellent jest, by my troth."

"Hast heard of that new-fangled invention called 'forks'" inquired Master Constable of Master Cotton, as he was diligently fingering of his meat.

"It comes from Italy," replied the other. "Your gallants there are so monstrous fine they can not be brought to touch their victuals, so they have got them a steel thing with prongs to it, with the which they lift what they would eat into their mouths."

"That looketh to be nothing better than flying in the face of providence," observed Master Donne very gravely. "Of what use, I pray you, can be our fingers if not for laying hold of our meat? I could never be brought to tolerate such atheistical inventions."

The supper proceeded much in this way; with an occasional joke from Ben Jonson or Master Shakspeare, which was sure to create famous mirth among the company. The face of the portly hostess looked as warm and as round as the sun at harvest-time, whilst that of her daughter, sitting opposite, seemed like unto a reflection of it. Both at last were prevailed on to eat; but Dame Cannikin, though ever so much engaged in the eating of her own supper, still appeared to have her eyes everywhere, still talked with little intermission to all; and still continued to shake her fat sides at every jest that was uttered, either by her guests or herself.

When all had eat what sufficed them, Mistress Cannikin giving her daughter a look which the other quickly interpreted, rose from her seat.

"I hope the supper hath pleased you gentlemen? Barnaby, get you the voider ready, and sweep the table," observed she; and as soon as she spoke commendations broke from all.

"Indeed, it was most admirably provided," said Sir Walter.

"It be said that some mermaids are to be avoided," added Master Shakspeare, "because of their beguiling men to their destruction; but they who relate this tale never met with the mermaid of Friday street, else would they have told a clean contrary story."

"Yea, forsooth, and indeed most truly and prettily spoken," replied the portly hostess. "Barnaby! heed how thou holdest that dish! Our mermaid shall harm none, I promise you. Humphrey! take up the trenchers carefully! And what wine please you to have noble Sir Walter? See to the carrying of the dishes into the buttery, Kate! Shall it be the Gascoigne, the Bastard, the Ipocras, the Muscovadine, the Canary, the Sherris, or the Charneco?"

"What say you, my masters?" inquired Sir Walter. "Methinks the Canary

is of so good a quality we can not do better than give it another trial."

"In truth it be exceeding good," replied Master Shakspeare. "Mayhap 'twould be as well though were we to have with it some Ipocras."

"And some sack also, good hostess!" cried Ben Jonson. "The sack of your making be of so delectable a sort, I would I could swallow a butt of it."

"Then would you make but a sorry *sack-but*," observed Master Shakspeare with a laugh, in which he was joined by all.

"Nay, but the sack-but be a famous ancient instrument," exclaimed Master Cotton. "I doubt not were it well played on 'twould discourse most excellent music even now."

"Let me catch any playing on me," replied Ben Jonson, seeming to be a little out of humor. "I promise you I would give them a tune to dance to."

"'Green Sleeves,' or 'Light o' love,' perchance," said Dame Cannikin merrily. "Master Francis, I hope you have found proper enjoyment in your supper. They be the movingest tunes I have ever met with, and many a time and oft have I danced to them by the hour. Barnaby, mind you let not the dish slip! Then it shall be my choice Canary and Ipocras; and you shall have some sack too of my very delicatest brewing." Whereupon the portly hostess took herself out of the room, talking all the way she went.

After Barnaby had swept, with a long wooden knife, the bones off the table, into a basket, called the voider, the wine was brought upon the table, with sundry sorts of fruits and cakes, and very quickly the whole party got to be more merry than ever. Jests flew about like hailstones, hitting everybody; but there was nothing like unto the sayings of Ben Jonson and Master Shakspeare, which for sparkling wit exceeded all that had been heard. These two were continually letting off some smart thing against each other, which was sure to be retaliated, till mayhap, Ben Jonson getting the worst of it, or not being of so pleasant a temper as was his antagonist, did get so nigh upon quarrelling, that Sir Walter Raleigh was obliged to interfere to keep peace between them. Master Francis held his prate like a modest youth as he was; or spoke only when he was addressed by any of those around him, for he could not bring himself to attempt bandying jests with the choicest wits of the age.

Presently there returned Mistress Cannikin, carrying the huge silver tankard that had stood in the cupboard, closely followed by the buxom Kate with a plate of figs and another of oranges.

"I have brought you the sack, Master Jonson," said she, placing it before him, with her full round face all radiant with smiles. "It be made of the choicest sherris, and I have used all my cunning in the brewing of it. Barnaby, place the baked pippins and comfits nigh Master Francis, and the marchpane closer to Sir Walter."

"Say not so, good hostess, I pray you," replied Master Jonson, "for if you have used *all* your cunning, you must needs be at your wit's end for the next brewing."

"Yea, forsooth, and so I should," exclaimed the portly dame, laughing very merrily. "That be a famous conceit of yours. Kate! put you the figs before Master Jonson, he may chance to like some. Well to be sure that be most wittingly said of you."

"What wine would you please to take with us, good dame?" inquired Raleigh.

"Excuse me, I pray you, noble Sir Walter," replied Mistress Cannikin; yet, for all her denial, looking as if she would comply on a little pressing: "methinks women should not be wine-bibbers.—Kate! those oranges to Master Fletcher."

"What! doth our sweet hostess of the Mermaid refuse to drink with her guests?" cried Master Shakspeare, seemingly in some surprise. "Indeed, that can we never allow. We shall drink with a greater zest when your cherry lips have been bathed in the wine."

"By my troth, Master Shakspeare, that is prettily spoken of you," cried the portly dame, smirking famously, as if she was well pleased with the compliment. "Cherry lips, forsooth! as I am a true woman, those be most fair words for my time of life. Try you one of those pippins, Master Donne, they be in excellent good repute. Well, then, sweet Master Shakspeare, since you are so pressing, I will take just one cup of canary." The wine was given to her without loss of time,—and she then added, standing up with it in her hand,—"Gentlemen all—I drink your good healths, and wish you a hearty welcome to the Mermaid," after which she tasted the canary, sipping it very daintily at first, and then finishing it at a draught.

"And now, fair Kate, what say *you* to a cup of canary?" asked Sir Walter.

"Indeed—la! I would rather not," said the girl, looking somewhat abashed.

"Tilly vally, wench! one cup will do thee no hurt," exclaimed Mistress Cannikin.

"No harm in the least, sweet Kate, o' my word," cried Master Shakspeare. "Nay, we can not excuse you, pretty Kate. I would I were the cup that should be kissed by so delicate a mouth."

"Who would be after *sweet cates* now, and be hanged to thee!" exclaimed Ben Jonson, throwing a fig's end at Master Shakspeare.

"Heed him not, sweet Kate; but drink a cup of wine, I pray you," said Master Shakspeare: "we can judge by what he hath thrown at me, that he careth but a fig's end about the matter; so to the canary, and quickly, sweet Kate."

"Indeed—la! it seemeth monstrous to drink wine with so many brave gallants all at once," exclaimed Mistress Kate, seemingly with a wonderful innocency.

"Take a cup with each of us, then," observed Ben Jonson; "I doubt not *that* would satisfy you."

"Yea, forsooth! but *I* should not be satisfied, I promise you," replied the portly hostess. "She would be 'in her cups,' indeed, were she to drink so many."

"Nay, I think the cups would be in her," rejoined the other.

"Like enough she would have both cups and hiccups," added the dame, in the same humor. "Come, wench, drink the wine: I warrant me now thou art as eager for it as a brood of ducklings for the water. I mind not taking another cup just to keep thee company, for I doubt hugely thou wilt do it unless, for all thy eagerness—thou art so monstrous shy in such matters."

It may not appear quite incredible that the portly hostess and her portly daughter drank of the Canary, soon after which they took themselves out of the room.

"Shall we not have a song, my masters?" inquired Sir Walter. "Are there so many notable sweet choristers here, and yet not inclined for a carol? Fie on you, Master Shakspeare! Is your voice out of tune, or doth your memory fail you? Master Jonson, you are not used to be so tuneless. Master Beaumont! Master Fletcher! Master Carew! what hath become of your admirable minstrelsy?"

To these inquiries there were presently some excuses; but Sir Walter would take none. Then some said they would sing presently.

"Why ask you not Master Cotton?" said Ben Jonson, "I doubt not, were he pressed upon it, he would sing you a famous song."

"Indeed, I have the most pestilent hoarseness," replied Master Cotton.

"A murrain on thy hoarseness!" exclaimed the other. "Thou canst sing like a very swan, if thou hast a mind: or, if thou hast no voice for singing, croak like the frogs of Aristophanes. But, come, tune thy reed. Give us a wonderful moving ditty on the loss of some musty old manuscript; or a right laudatory ballad, made upon the discovery of Cleopatra's jordan."

"I have no such songs, I promise you," replied the antiquary, joining in the mirth of his companions; "but, provided you excuse all defects, I will essay whatever my poor ability will allow."

"Bravo, Master Cotton!" cried those around him; and soon after, in a famous merry humor, he sung the following ballad:—

MASTER COTTON'S SONG.

I sing of a friar—a barefooted friar,
As brawny a fellow as heart could desire,
With his shaven crown, and his cordod gown,
And his rosary counting from town to town;
Oh! he'd shout forth a psalm with such absolute grace,
That the folks cried 'God speed to your rosy face.
round
Oh the friar! the barefooted friar!
Let us sing in the praise of this excellent friar.

He preached not of fasting—not he—by the rood!
For he knew that short commons did nobody good:
Instead of denouncing a flagon of wine,
He swore that good liquor made good men divine;
And as for the kissing a wench on the sly,
He would do it himself—or at least he would try.
Oh the friar! the barefooted friar!
Let us sing in the praise of this saint of a friar.

'Twas a marvel to hear how well he his beads told,
Whenever he had nothing better to hold,
And out of his mouth how his prayers made a din
When any choice morsel he could not put in;
Or at his devotions how strict he had grown,
If not to "Our Lady"—doubtless to *his own*.
Oh the friar! the barefooted friar!
Let us sing in the praise of this capital friar.

Brave-hearted knights hath he shrined with his prayers,
Buxom fair dames hath he blessed with his cares;
He hath christened the babe on the mother's fond breast,
And scores of young virgins to him have confessed.
Of the penance he set surely none could complain,
For they got absolution again and again.
Oh the friar! the barefooted friar:
Let us sing in the praise of this excellent friar.

He talked not of tithes—for Pope cared not a fig,
Whilst he dined off a capon or dainty fat pig;
But the fame of his doings—his frolics and feasts,
Excited the wrath of the rest of the priests:
They vowed he'd be damned, as the worst sinner should,
But *he* boldly swore he'd be —— if he would!
Oh the friar! the barefooted friar!
Let us sing in the praise of this resolute friar.

Now one luckless day this good friar he died,
Whereat all the women most lustily cried;

There was wringing of hands—there was shedding of tears,
There were lots of long faces, and no lack of fears.
Old Nick might have broiled every saint on his fire,
Had he only but spared them their barefooted friar.
Oh the friar! the marvellous friar!
Let us sing in the praise of this wonderful friar.

"Oh! oh!" quoth the devil, at meeting his soul
Nigh the gate of purgation, a taking a stroll,
"Though some score of sinners you've got out of here,
I have you fast for this many a year."
"By the mass," said the friar, "if here I must stay,
I'll be hanged if I'll go till you show me the way."
Oh the friar! the barefooted friar!
Let us sing in the praise of this valorous friar.

Master Satan, who's learned some civilities now,
Led the way to the gate with a smile and a bow,
When lo! 'mid the damned did he presently shoot,
With a kick of the breech from the friar's broad foot:
Away sped the friar—his foe followed quick;
But heaven opened for him, and shut out Old Nick.
Oh the friar! the barefooted friar!
Let us sing in the praise of this saint of a friar!

"An excellent good song and a merry, Master Cotton!" exclaimed Ben Jonson; and similar commendations flowed from others of the company. "Said I not, my masters, we should have famous singing out of him?" continued he, "and have I not proved myself a true prophet?"

"Indeed, methinks you spoke of songs in no way like unto that we have just heard," answered Master Constable.

"No matter," replied the other. "If I have not touched the bull's eye, I have hit the target."

"I can now commend thee with a good conscience, Ben," observed Master Shakspeare, "thy conceit, like thy shooting, is not *a miss*."

"Ah, thou sweet wag! thou wilt give me no rest," cried Ben Jonson, laughingly.

"There be no rest for the wicked, Ben," said Master Shakspeare, in the same humor.

"Callest thou me one of the wicked?" inquired his companion, seeming to be greatly shocked.

"Nay, thou shalt not be of the wicked this time," added the other, "because it happeneth thou art one of us; and if thou art of the wicked, then, mayhap, I am like to be nearly half as bad as art thou, which is a thing so horrible to acknowledge, I could never be brought to do it."

"Oh, thou aggravating varlet!" exclaimed Ben Jonson, good-humoredly; "thou abominable, facetious villain! May I never taste sack again if I do not think thee the most superlative, prevaricating piece of vanity that ever associated with true men. What, thou wouldst be afraid to confess thyself half so bad as am I? Thou art right there, for no one would believe the confession when 'twas made. I tell thee, I would find more virtue in a bad oyster, than is to be met with in thy whole body."

"As thou wilt, Ben, as thou wilt," replied Master Shakspeare. "If thou art for finding anything commendable in bad oysters, I have done with thee. My stomach will endure no such unsavory similes. Keep whatever virtue thou discoverest under such circumstances; for though it must needs be but little, 'twill be something for thee to boast of—and that, methinks, ought to be a great object with thee at present."

Shortly after this, Master Cotton did call upon Sir Walter Raleigh for a song, which presently brought forth the ballad that is here given:—

SIR WALTER RALEIGH'S SONG.

A comely young knight went out to the fight,
And he was the pattern of chivalrie;
For so boldly he went through the tournament,
And in hall and in bower so courteouslie.
Each damsel she uttered a benison, [John.
And sighed when she thought of the knight of St.

With sword or with spear, he had not his peer,
In England, in France, or in Germanie;
And at singing, so choice was his lute and his voice,
That there never was heard of such minstrelsie.
Then the heart of each damsel went galloping on
When she glanced on the face of the knight of St. John.

His eyes were as bright as rivers of light,
His cheek like a rose from the east countrie;
And he stood up so tall and so gallant withal,
None could gaze on unmoved at his excellencie.
Then ev'ry fair damsel, cried when he was gone,
"What a love of a knight is the knight of St. John."

He Paynims had slain, a hundred or twain,
In Palestine and in Arabie;
Yet ten times a day would he kneel down and pray,
As though he had lived in great infamie.
And loudly each damsel proclaimed when 'twas done,
"What a saint of a knight is the knight of St. John."

But when it was told that his heart was as cold
As coldest winter in Muscovie;
That he was above ev'ry feeling of love,
And was bound by a vow unto chastitie.
"Alack!" cried each damsel whose heart he had won,
"What a wretch of a knight is the knight of St. John!"

This song also met with exceeding commendation; and the wine having been circulated pretty briskly, all seemed to be in the very best of spirits, and ready to praise anything that showed the smallest sign of worthiness, so that it proceeded from any of their company. Jests became more general. Master Shakspeare and Ben Jonson, however, still uttered the best, and the greatest number of them; as at first, usually choosing each other to be the subject: but it is utterly impossible I could put down one half of the choice things they said; and much afraid am I that the choicest have

escaped me. At this time, Beaumont and Fletcher were engaged with Master Shakspeare in some friendly talk concerning of a play of theirs that was to be performed at the Globe. Master Selden was leaning forward over the table, listening attentively to an account given by Master Cotton, of the finding of certain curious manuscripts in an ancient chest, the which Master Donne and Master Martin seemed also intent upon hearing. Master Constable and Master Sylvester, with Master Carew, were laughing merrily to a droll anecdote told by Ben Jonson; and Sir Walter Raleigh was relating to Master Francis an adventure that he had had in the wars.

"I have prevailed on Dick Burbage to play the principal character," observed Master Shakspeare to his brother playwriters, "but it hath so happened there must be a delay of some few days before it can be played. Dick went the other night to visit an alderman's wife by appointment, and his worship, her husband, returning sooner than they expected, Dick leaped out of the window, and had the ill hap to sprain his ankle; since when I can get him to talk of nothing but the monstrousness of such husbands, who be ever a coming home when they should stay abroad."

"That is so like him," observed Master Beaumont, laughingly. "He doeth an ill thing, getteth himself into a scrape for it, and then with a famous impudency none can help laughing at—abuseth not himself, who must be the only one to blame, but the very party he was striving to do hurt to."

"For his drolleries methinks he shall be found nearly as wild as Green," added Master Fletcher. "There is a good story of him I heard him tell to-day."

"Ha! prythee relate it," said Master Shakspeare.

"Green walking nigh upon St. Savior's, met a funeral," continued the other. "He was struck with the miserable countenances of all who made part of the procession. The undertaker and his men seemed determined on looking more mournful than the mourners, and the mourners appeared to be vying with each other who should look the most wo-begone. Green could not abide such awful long faces. He said the sight of them was so exceeding pitiful he could not but feel for their hapless conditions; and this made him resolved to strive if it were possible to make them all in a better humor. Thereupon, upon coming up to them, he put on one of his comicalest faces. In a moment, undertaker, bearers, mourners, and all, relaxed somewhat in that severity of visage that had so moved him. If they did not smile, they were on the point of it. Seeing this, after passing them, Tom made a short cut, and met them at the corner of the next street, with a face more comical than he had put on before; at the sight of which there can be no doubt in the world every one set up a palpable grin. The next thing he did was to fix himself at the church door, and when they came up he looked into every man's face with a countenance so marvellously ridiculous that it was impossible to say whether the undertaker or the mourners laughed the loudest; and as for the bearers, they shook their sides so heartily, that the coffin went jog, jog, jog, upon their shoulders, in imminent danger of being pitched upon the parson, who, as was very natural, looked awfully scandalized at their behavior."

"Ha! ha!" exclaimed Master Shakspeare, bursting out into a famous laugh, "that is Tom Green all over."

"What art making so much noise about? a murrain on thee!" cried Ben Jonson from the other end of the table. "Dost find so few to heed thy sorry jests thou art forced into laughing at them thyself. Well—had I wit of any sort, it should be such as might move the mirth of my company."

"Thou art right, Ben," replied his ready antagonist. "Hadst thou wit of any sort, doubtless thou couldst make a goodly use of it; but I see thou art aware of thine own deficiencies, so I will say no more on that head."

"Thou canst say as much as thou wilt on that or any other head—saving thine own," retorted the other. "And, as thou knowest full well, it be very proper policy of thee to be silent on so barren a subject."

"Nay, my head can not well be barren," said Master Shakspeare good humoredly, "seeing that it hath its labors continually. But as for thine, Ben—I do wonder thou art not ashamed to look it in the face, thou doth it so little credit. Thou wilt bring shame upon thy head, depend on't. Some power thou hast there, no doubt, for 'tis well known thou art *head-strong*."

"Out upon thee!" exclaimed Ben Jonson, whilst those who heard the jest were laughing very merrily. "Thou art like a bad oyster—that openeth its mouth only to show how worthless it be."

'Bad oysters again, and be hanged to thee!" cried the other. "Why, what a villanous taste hast thou! Well, if thy humor runneth on such garbage, let it; yet would it be but civil of thee couldst thou refrain from thrusting such unwholesome conceits before those of weaker stomachs."

"Mayhap there shall be found more likeness betwixt you and a bad oyster than you think can exist," observed Master Fletcher.

"O' my life I see not any resemblance," replied Master Shakspeare. "Prythee say how dost thou make it out."

"Because it seemeth to me that he that biteth at you be like to get the worst of it," answered Master Fletcher, "and so it be with your bad oyster."

"Ah! he is villanously unpalatable!" cried Ben Jonson in some bitterness.

"There is another point that bringeth the resemblance still closer," added Master Beaumont.

"Alack, is it brought so home to me!" cried the other very pitifully.

"'Tis the bad oysters that produce all the pearls," continued his companion.

"Ben! thy bad oyster be not so bad a fish after all!" exclaimed Master Shakspeare very drolly, amid the laughter of all around him.

"Away! I'll have none of thee!" cried Ben Jonson, seemingly a little put out, whilst he appeared intent upon the paring of an orange. "Thou art intolerably conceited. Thou takest none to be so good as thyself. I doubt not for all the airs thou dost give thyself, there shall easily be found thy betters in scholarship, and thy equal in all things."

"A song, Master Shakspeare, I pray you," exclaimed Sir Walter Raleigh, seeing a quarrel was at hand, unless he had skill enough to thrust it aside. "It be monstrous of you to have remained all this time and sung nothing."

"Ask Ben for a song," replied Master Shakspeare. "He is the capitalest singer of a good song among us all."

"I be not in the humor. I can not sing. I have forgotten such songs as I used to attempt," said Ben Jonson, still a little out of temper, but not so much as he was.

"Surely thou hast not forgot that most sweet song of thine, 'Drink to me only with thine eyes'?" inquired the other. "The sweetest, truest, delicatest verses I have met with this many a day; and I be thoroughly convinced of it, they will live in the reputation of the world as long as there shall be found hearts and minds capable of appreciating their infinite beauty."

"Dost really think so, Will?" eagerly asked Ben Jonson, his features gradually changing from a very evident sulkiness to a most glowing pleasure, as he took his eyes off what he was intent upon, and fixed them upon Master Shakspeare. "Dost think them of any goodness? Dost fancy they will live any time? Art sure the song pleaseth thee?"

"There can be no doubt of it," replied the other. "'Tis as proper a song as ever was writ: and I should show an infamous lack of judgment were I not to give it the praise that be its due."

"At least it showeth a wonderful noble heart in thee to say so," said Master Jonson earnestly. "The more especially, because thou hast written a score or two of songs of a merit I despair of attaining; and I do take some little shame upon myself for appearing out of temper with thee, because thou dost sometimes press me, as I have fancied, somewhat too hard."

"I can not press thee too hard, Ben," answered Master Shakspeare. "When I meet with thee I know I have my match. I like mightily to find so able an opponent; and if I seek to give thee a hard rub or so, 'tis to rouse thee to put forth all thy strength—that I may admire thee the more for it."

"I'faith you are just like two of the very skilfulest masters of fence," observed Sir Walter in an excellent good humor. "They know of each other's cunning at the weapon, and are ever a thrusting away to prove which be the better man; and although both get no lack of hard pokes, they can not part without being in famous admiration at the other's skill."

"That is it, true enough, Sir Walter," replied Ben Jonson, in a like merry mood. "We never meet without a duello of quirks and quiddities. Mayhap he cometh at me with a jest, and o' my life I can not help having at him again."

"You combat not with blunt foils, as I am a witness," added Raleigh laughing, "for there is ever a very fine point in your weapons."

"Ha! ha! Perchance there be!" cried Ben, joining in the laugh. "But 'tis my humor—'tis my humor."

"That is just what I wish," said Master Shakspeare. "Thou hast known for some time how infinitely I like 'Every man in his humor.'"

"Ah, that have I, sweet Will," replied the other with a very sincere friendliness. "Nor have I forgot that it was thy kindness, when I was unknown and uncared for, that got my play to be taken up by the players."

"I pray you, Master Jonson, favor us with your song," said Sir Walter Raleigh. "The night is drawing in, and if things go on at this rate, we shall be forced to take ourselves away with such a lack of harmony as is not usual amongst us."

"I sing not before my master. I know myself better," replied Ben Jonson good-humoredly. "When that sweet facetious varlet has delighted us sufficiently, I will strive what my poor wit can do to amuse you in an humbler way."

"Disparage not thy ability, Ben; else must my judgment be called in question," observed Master Shakspeare in a like mood. "But that there shall be no wasting of time in the matter, I will give you what I know of a merry ballad I heard in Warwickshire when I was a boy."

This announcement was received with exceeding satisfaction by all; and shortly, after a monstrous diverting fashion, he sung the verses here given.

MASTER SHAKSPEARE'S SONG.

Gaffer Gosling arose on one fine summer's day,
Donned his best Sunday jerkin and hosen of gray,
And with staff in his hand, and his hat on his head,
Right out of his threshold he presently sped.
He told unto none on what he was intent,
But in truth, 'twas in search of the cuckoo he went;
For of late, let him go anywhere, far or near,
The note of that ill-omened bird met his ear.
"Cuckoo!—Cuckoo!"
And all the year through,
Gaffer Gosling was mocked by the villain cuckoo!

He went a few steps, in no mood to rejoice,
He stopped to take heed and again heard the voice.
Now this way, now that—now a little way on,
Now close at his elbow, now far away gone.
He looked up to the housetops, and down to the ground,
But never a trace of a cuckoo he found;
A few folk of the village he met in his way,
And they all smiled upon him and wished him Good-day!
"Cuckoo!—Cuckoo!"
"There, I hear it anew!"
Cried the Gaffer. "I *must* find this villain cuckoo!"

He hied to his gossip, and him he addressed,
To know where the cuckoo had builded his nest;
Who told him he kept quite unseen and unknown,
And preferred any pretty bird's nest to his own.
There tarried the varlet whilst he had a mind,
Then fled he, and left a young cuckoo behind;
And the pretty bird fed it and tended it well,
And amongst her own brood oft allowed it to dwell.
"Cuckoo!—Cuckoo!"
"Gog's wounds! he's here too!"
Said the Gaffer, and searched for the villain cuckoo.

Then hither and thither, in every place,
He poked his gray head and his old pippin face;
For still was he certain the bird was close by,
Though wherever he turned he was mocked by the cry.
He got in a rage, but his rage was in vain;
For wherever he turned still it mocked him again.
He stamped and he struck the hard ground with his stick,
Crying, "Where dost thou hide thee, thou slanderous chick!"
"Cuckoo!—Cuckoo!"
"Drat thee and thy crew!
I could wring thy young neck—oh, thou villain cuckoo!"

Through the lane, through the wood, o'er the common he hies,
Yet in vain for the sight of a cuckoo he tries;
Although from each tree, every hedgerow and wall,
As plain as could speak, he heard the bird call.
Then came home dull of heart and as gloomy in thought,
Because that he'd had all his trouble for naught;
But he there met a sight that nigh robbed him of life—
'Twas the priest, cheek by jowl with his pretty young wife!
"Cuckoo!—Cuckoo!"
Gaffer Gosling looked blue.
He had found out the nest of the villain cuckoo.

"O' my life, a good song, Will!" cried Ben Jonson, laughing as loud as any there. "A right exquisite song! By this hand! I have not heard so droll a song this many a day."

"Indeed, 'tis a most merry conceit," said Master Constable.

"I like the humor of it hugely," added Master Sylvester; and all said something to the same purpose; for, out of all doubt, there was none there that did not relish exceedingly both the drollery of the song, and the infinite drollery of the singer.

"Commend you not so liberally, my masters," observed Master Shakspeare, after emptying a cup of wine. "Ben Jonson will presently give you better cause for praise."

"Nay, that can never be, sweet Will!" replied Ben Jonson. "I know not anything so truly laughable as that which thou hast so diverted us with, nor could I put such provoking mirth in it as thou hast, knew I songs of ever so comical a sort. But such as I have remembrance of you shall hear if it please you to listen." This intimation produced a proper attention amongst his companions, and in a few minutes he commenced singing of the following ballad:—

BEN JONSON'S SONG.

Once Old Father Time walked along,
A journey to take at his leisure;
When a group of fair nymphs there came up in a throng,
All moving in gracefulest measure.
"He shall tarry awhile," did they laughingly say;
"We will hold him with us, and then *dance Time away!*"
But although bound with garlands they made him advance,
They soon found that they could not *keep Time* in the dance.
"Alack, silly nymphs!" then he cries,
"Whilst ye all dance so gayly, TIME FLIES."

Then off Father Time again set,
The dust from his scythe gravely wiping;
Till a party of skilful young shepherds he met,
Passing Time most melodiously piping.
Some sought to hold Time with a vigorous gripe,
Some bade him to listen how well they could pipe,
They played, but ere long found their pipes would not chime,
They held not the tune, and they could not *keep Time*.
"Alack, silly shepherds!" he cries,
"Whilst ye all pipe so gayly, TIME FLIES."

Again the old fellow set out,
Without a companion to cheer him;
But was stopped in his way by the laugh and the shout
Of a crowd of gay Bacchanals near him.
With his scythe the wild youths cut the grapes from the vine,
And seizing his hour-glass soon filled it with wine.
"We with drinking *kill Time!*" cried they all, in great glee:
But whilst merrily quaffing, Time set himself free.
"Alack, silly topers!" he cries,
"Whilst ye all drink so gayly, TIME FLIES."

So, my masters, drink freely and fast,
Time coming looks wondrously pleasant;
Let us merrily find our pastime in *Time past*,
As we make the best use of *Time present*.
Then crowned with fresh roses let's pass round the flask,
And the sunbeams of wit on our pleasures shall bask;
For *he* may all heed of Time's progress resign,
Who quaffs—freely quaffs of the rosy red wine.
Old boy, we thy hour-glass despise,
We care not a whit *how* TIME FLIES.

This song was well received of all, especially by Master Shakspeare, who seemed much taken with the conceit of it; and it appeared to give a fresh zest to the conviviality of the company; for more wine was brought in, more sack made, and the laugh became louder, and the jest more frequent. The table now lacked much of the pleasant appearance it had. Certes, there was a great show of empty bottles, glasses, cups, tankards, and lighted candles; but of the dishes, mayhap there was a pippin in one, two or three prunes in another, half an orange in a third, and in the fourth nothing but parings of apples and shells of walnuts. Many more songs were sung: a love ballad by Master Carew, and ditties of a like kind by Beaumont and Fletcher. Master Donne and one or two others, the which have gone clean out of my memory, as well as sundry droll catches and exquisite madrigals which were then and there sung by divers of the company. In truth, nothing could exceed the mirth and harmony that prevailed, the which Sir Walter Raleigh at one end of the table, and Master Shakspeare at the other, sought to preserve with an exceeding pleasant humor and courteous free-heartedness. Every one looked moved by the spirit of good-fellowship, and although Master Cotton being in a grave discourse to two or three attentive listeners on a matter of some antiquity, did ever and anon get slyly pelted by Master Shakspeare on one side, and Ben Jonson on the other, with orange pips and nutshells, to the infinite mirth of those around, he took it in good part, till a prune-stone from the latter hit him so sore a blow on the nose, that he suddenly caught hold of the half orange that lay in the dish before him, and flung it at Ben Jonson with so true an aim that it smashed against his head, whereupon the laugh was louder than ever, and Master Jonson joined in it as merrily as the rest. All at once there was a great cry for Master Francis to sing a song. He felt he had scarce confidence to attempt such a thing before so famous a company, and begged hard to be let off; but none heeding his excuses, and Sir Walter Raleigh and Master Shakspeare pressing him on the subject, he, after some to-do, and with a voice somewhat tremulous, began to sing the verses here set down.

MASTER FRANCIS' SONG.

Forbear, sweet Wanton! Go your ways!
I heed no more your dainty smiling:
Your sugared words—your thrilling gaze—
And matchless craft in heart-beguiling.
For though your beauty may be bright,
If all may in its splendor bask,
Now bid my love a fair "good night!"—
I will not con a common task.

Forbear, false Syren! Strive no more!
Your tuneful voice hath ceased to charm me:
Your power hath gone—your reign is o'er,
Those witching sounds can no more harm me—
For though the strain was honey sweet,
Its honey sweetness all allowed;
And I like not the poor conceit,
To be but one among the crowd.

But give to me the steadfast soul
Whose love no selfish care can sever,
And I will own her fond control,
And throne her in my heart for ever.
But till such golden maid I find,
(And fondly hope I such exists);
The love that changeth like the wind,
May, like the wind, go where it lists.

"Truly, a most sweet song, Master Francis," exclaimed Ben Jonson, who had listened to the young singer, as had all, with an entire attentiveness.

"And of an exceeding proper spirit," added Master Shakspeare; who fancied it was writ by Master Francis in relation to Joanna—in which he was in some way right, for he had composed it soon after his quarrel with her.

"'Tis indeed, very admirably conceived," said Sir Walter Raleigh; and from others round about him, Master Francis received such praise, that although it

pleased him mightily to be so commended of so many good judges, it somewhat disconcerted him.

"Now, my masters, for a parting cup, and then for our homes," cried Sir Walter, rising, and presently all filled up their cups with what liquor they had, and drinking it off jovially, each took his hat and made himself ready to go. But it so happened that Master Cotton was seen fast asleep in his chair, and Ben Jonson spying this, and having enough sack in him to be in the humor for any sport, cautiously approached him—the rest looking on, curious to see what would come of it; and fully expecting some famous jest or another.

"Fire! fire! fire!" bawled Ben Jonson in the ear of the sleeper.

"Ha! what? eh!" cried Master Cotton, jumping up suddenly and rubbing his eyes.

"Your house be burning to the ground!" cried Master Jonson.

"Save my manuscripts! Save my books!" shouted the antiquary, as he rushed hither and thither in as complete a fright as ever was seen—but he was quickly called to his senses by the shouts of laughter that broke from every one in the room; and then finding matters were not so bad as he had feared, he took the jest as merrily as any.

"And now, good dame," said Sir Walter, as he, with the others, entered a little room furnished with a goodly show of all sorts of drinking vessels and bottles, and things appertaining to a tavern, among which the portly hostess and her daughter were sitting; "If you will reckon the pay, we will pay the reckoning."

"That will I, noble Sir Walter, and quickly," exclaimed Mistress Cannikin, laughing loudly at the conceit, as she proceeded to the back of a door on which sundry curious marks were chalked; then making her calculations, she cried out in the midst. "Humphrey! put out the lights in the Dolphin. Kate, take the money of such as I name. Barnaby, ask the gentlemen in the Half-Moon, if they lack anything. Indeed Sir Walter, 'twas an exceeding droll conceit. Ten and sixpence if it please you, noble sir."

"See that we get into no scrape—we are reckoning without our host," observed Ben Jonson in a manner that afforded much mirth to his companions.

"The hostess shall bear you blameless," added the portly dame, laughing heartily. "I thank you, noble Sir Walter. Good, upon my life! Worthy Master Jonson, your reckoning cometh to just six shillings and a groat. Kate! take of Master Cotton five shillings and three-pence. An admirable conceit, by my troth."

"The reckoning must needs be in very good hands," observed Master Shakspeare gallantly. "Every one knoweth our hostess be so exceeding *fair*."

"Ha! ha!" cried Mistress Cannikin, displaying her double chin to famous advantage. "Sure never was so witty a thing said. Nine and eleven-pence, sweet Master Shakspeare. At my time of life too! Kate, seven and a penny to Master Donne. And yet it was so prettily spoken."

"And now, sweet hostess, for a salute at parting," exclaimed Master Shakspeare, as he threw his arms round her portly person, and snatched a caress.

"Heaven prosper you!" cried the old dame, taking it very good-humoredly. "Eight and a penny halfpenny, good Master Fletcher. An excellent-hearted gentleman, and a courteous. Kate, five and six-pence to Master Beaumont."

"Indeed, la! Master Jonson, it be monstrous to be kissing of me!" drawled out the hostess's daughter, as she was faintly struggling in the arms of him she had named.

"Tilly valley, wench!" exclaimed her mother, laughing to see what was going on. "A kiss from a gentleman be no great matter—especially if he payeth his reckoning handsomely. Seven shillings and two-pence if it please you, worthy Master Constable, and two shillings and a penny left owing at the last time."

"Now, sweet Kate," whispered Ben Jonson.

"Ben! Ben!" called out Master Shakspeare, shaking his head very reprovingly. "Thou art still hankering after the *sweet cates*, I see."

"Cater for thyself, then," replied the other in the same humor. This sort of scene proceeded till the reckoning was paid, and then all started into the street as merry as crickets.

CHAPTER XXXV.

O, for a muse of fire, that would ascend
The brightest heaven of invention!
A kingdom for a stage, princes to act,
And monarchs to behold the swelling scene!
Then should the warlike Harry like himself
Assume the port of Mars; and, at his heels,
Leashed in like hounds, should famine, sword, and fire
Crouch for employment.

SHAKSPEARE.

Convey thee from the thought of thy disgrace
Steal from thyself, and be thy care's own thief.
But yet what comfort shall I hereby gain?
Bearing the wound I needs must feel the pain!
DANIEL.

What bloody villain
Provoked thee to this murder?
BEAUMONT AND FLETCHER.

MASTER FRANCIS was again upon the wide seas in as goodly a ship as ever ploughed the waves, with his true friend Harry Daring, and his kind patron Sir Walter Raleigh. I have already made mention of the likelihood of an expedition against the Spaniards, and this had come to pass. At the time when England was threatened with an invasion by the boastful armada, which, by God's good help, was turned into a laughing stock, Sir Walter Raleigh counselled the sailing of an expedition to destroy the Spanish fleet in their own harbor, and although it was not acted on at the time, now, after a lapse of eight years, as it was known Philip was engaged in similar desperate enterprises against England, Queen Elizabeth resolved on giving him such a blow as should make him repent of his villany. For this purpose, at an expense to Elizabeth of fifty thousand pounds, and of great sums to many who did contribute toward it, a fleet of a hundred and fifty sail were equipped at Plymouth, of the which were seventeen of the navy royal, eighteen men-of-war, and six store-ships supplied by the States, and twenty-two ships-of-war furnished by the Dutch, under the command of their own admiral—the rest being tenders, pinnaces, victuallers, and transports—and these, carrying nigh upon fourteen thousand soldiers and seamen, beside one thousand gentlemen-volunteers, were making what speed they could for the Spanish coast, every ship with sealed orders not to be opened till a proper time, under the direction of my Lord Essex and my Lord High Admiral, assisted by a council of the queen's chiefest officers, of which, to Dame Elizabeth's huge delight, Sir Walter Raleigh was selected as one, appointed rear-admiral, and put in command of the Warspite, a ship of the first class.

Nothing could be more in accordance with Raleigh's humor than this expedition. At the urgent entreaty of his devoted wife, he had sought all means to restore himself to the queen's favor, and all means had failed; but although his very good friend Sir Robert Cecil, as he believed him to be, had, before his starting, done all he could to impress him with the notion of my Lord Essex's hostility, and he could not help observing, that Essex relished not at all that he should divide his authority, or control him in any way, Sir Walter saw that there was now a noble opportunity for him to distinguish himself, and he doubted not he should make such good use of it, as should recommend him to his sovereign, and win the friendly opinion of my Lord Essex, and all whom he had been taught to regard as his enemies.

By Master Francis the expedition was looked upon as an adventure in which he might gain such honor as would give him a fair credit with the world, despite of the mystery attached to his birth. Although he was greatly rejoiced at the issue of his interview with that wretched hypocrite Holdfast, and did build many pleasant dreams in consequence, more than once there came into his mind the possibility of his being that abased thing Queen Elizabeth had called him; and then the recollection of the shame she had put upon him before all her court, and the likelihood there was that such scenes might again occur, did fill his heart with so entire a wretchedness, that he felt he could endure anything rather than suffer similar treatment again. It is not to be imagined he got rid of all thoughts of Joanna. Frequently since he had caught sight of her at the playhouse, had she formed the subject of his reflections, to the exclusion of every other. The appearance in her company of such a thorough villain as he believed Padre Bartolomé to be, made him infinitely uneasy; and though he tried to dismiss any unfavorable inference, by fancying they might be strangers, the knowledge he had that both had been living at Guiana whilst he was there, more than once gave him the suspicion that they might be better acquainted with each other than he liked. He would probably have been careless of the matter had he believed what he had at his quarrelling with her: but ever since his finding she had done so much to rescue him from the Indians, notwithstanding the extraordinary manner she had behaved to him on his discovery of her, and all that he had heard and seen before—there ever lingered in his mind a doubt that she who could act so nobly was of so base a nature as he had been led to imagine: and living in the hope that she would one day prove herself to be all he could wish, whatever fresh thing he knew of likely to discourage that hope,

gave him a very monstrous disquietude. Imagining she was in London, he had made every inquiry, and sought every place in search of her; and when he found the pursuit fruitless, upon Master Shakspeare seriously counselling of him to give up all thoughts of her, he had sought the society of such young gentlewomen as his intimacy with Sir Walter Raleigh gave him access to: and though many were exceeding comely—and though there were few who did not look upon him with a more than ordinary kindness, he found, after all his endeavors, he could like none of them as he had liked the mercer's daughter of Eastcheap.

But who could enter into the expedition with more spirit than did Harry Daring? To him nothing could come more in the nick of time, or more completely to his mind. Ever since his return from El Dorado his restless humor had employed itself in all sorts of mad freaks, leading of such apprentices as he could get together (who looked upon him as a very prince of a fellow, he was so careless of his purse) into frequent encounters with his old opponents, the city watch, that the worthy citizens knew not what to make of it. All Eastcheap was in a constant uproar. There was scarce ever a night passed without some scuffle and tumult; and the barber-chirurgeons were kept in constant employ getting simples and plasters for the wounds, broken pates, and bruised limbs, of such of the watch and apprentices who got hurt. But amid all this wildness and prodigality, Harry Daring was ever doing of some generous action. He got Big Jack o' the Turnstile in a comfortable berth in the very ship of which his patron Sir Walter had promoted him to be one of his junior officers. To those who had suffered in any way by his tricks, he had made what amends he could. Even the old dame whose jaw he had so despoiled at his first essay in the extracting of teeth, meeting by accident, he gave such recompense to as nearly put her out of her wits with joy; and to Stephen Shortcake he and Master Francis behaved so liberally as quite to win the old man's heart. Not one of the serving-men were there that did not taste of his bounty; and those that he had drubbed the most were the most rewarded.

As the fleet sailed gallantly along, spreading themselves about, and the best sailors going ahead, they intercepted every vessel likely to convey intelligence of their coming to the enemy, so that not so much as the least pink could come within sight but was taken; and after a prosperous voyage they entered St. Sebastian's bay, within a league of Cadiz, whilst the Spaniards dreamed not of the English being out of their ports. When they arrived before Cadiz it was in the early morning, the sea went marvellous high, and the wind was exceeding large, nevertheless it was designed by the lord admiral to land some companies at the west side of the town, in divers long boats, light-horsemen, pinnaces, and barges: but in the attempt, one of the barges, having in her fourscore good soldiers, was sunk, out of whom eight were drowned, though great exertions were made to save all; and by the advice of Sir Walter Raleigh, who hastened to my Lord Essex on board of his ship, the Repulse, to show how injudicious it was to attack the town before the enemy's ships in the harbor had been mastered, the land forces were recalled, and little was done that day, save discharging at the enemy certain great pieces of ordnance, which they replied to in a like manner; but in consequence of the distance both parties were from each other, no great damage was done on either side.

The bay in which the English and Dutch fleet were riding looked large and amazingly beautiful, being in one part six or seven miles over, or thereabouts, yet having in it so many rocks, shelves, sands, and shallows, that the proper sea-room is not above two or three miles, and not so much in some places, so that it would be somewhat hazardous for many ships, of great burthen, such as those of the navy royal to be thrust in there, the more especially when the position of the enemy was considered. No sooner had the English presented themselves than four of the largest galleons of the Spaniards placed themselves to defend the numerous merchantmen which were lying there ready bound for the Indies, and seventeen of their galleys, all armed to the teeth were speedily got (under the walls of the town) in a position in which they might face the enemy with their prows; also keeping in such order and so together, that they could defend the town, the castle and the forts. The harbor was defended by Fort St. Philip, and by many pieces of ordnance, placed so as to rake the channel; and Fort Puntal guarded the strait leading toward Puerto Real, along the curtain upon the ramparts.

It having been agreed that the Spanish

fleet should be attacked—to the wonderful satisfaction of Harry Daring and all in the expedition—between five and six in the morning of the next day, it being the twenty-first of June, the English ships bore down upon their opponents, immediately upon which the merchants run up the river with as much speed as they could, the galleys betook themselves to the defence of the town, and all the powerfulest ships moored themselves head and stern, to have their broadsides to bear upon the advancing English. The four principal galleons of the Spanish fleet anchored under the guns of the fort of Puntal, placing three frigates on their right, two Portuguese galleons and argosies at their back, with the galleys by three and three, at intervals, in the choicest situations; and the admiral of New Spain, with forty sail of huge merchant-ships richly laden, defending the entrance, by stretching across it like a bridge. It was originally planned that Sir Walter Raleigh, he having been appointed rear-admiral, should lead the van; but although the honor of it was claimed by the vice-admiral, who was no other than Lord Thomas Howard, Sir Walter at the sailing of his squadron, took the start of all, and bore gallantly into the midst of the enemy, to the great admiration of the whole fleet. At first, the garrison let fly at him their artillery; then bellowed the cannon on the curtain, and next the seventeen galleys poured into him their great and small shot; but he answered them only with a flourish of trumpets; and amidst the loud cheering of his men and officers, he anchored beside two of the largest galleons, and presently poured all his heavy ordnance into them; the which he continued to do without intermission, though he was exposed to so raking a fire that the Warspite got dreadfully shattered. Sir Walter being well supported by other of the queen's ships, amongst whom was my Lord Essex, the fight soon became exceeding hot.

At this time, whilst the conflict was raging very terrible and hideous, on account of the quick flashes of fire and roaring thunder of the many culverins and cannon, one of the Dutch fly-boats, containing about a hundred fighting men, who had behaved themselves very valiant, by some negligence, set its powder afire, and blew up with a dreadful explosion, to the dismay of the English and Dutch, and to the wonderful contentment of the Spaniards; but their content was of no long continuance. They were so sorely pressed by such of the English ships as could get nigh them, though these were but seven in number, that they began to like it not at all. The scene on board of the Warspite was marvellous to look on. The wonderfulest enthusiasm prevailed both amongst mariners and soldiers, because of Sir Walter setting them so valiant an example; and amidst a most destructive fire, every piece which could be brought to bear against their gigantic enemies, the galleons, was cheerfully served by the crew; and the only desire expressed by all was, to come to closer quarters. Sir Walter having waited, hour after hour, for the coming up of the fly-boats, which ought to have gone in and boarded the enemy, and none coming, he went on board my Lord Essex's ship, and stated to him the necessity he was in, from the condition of his vessel, to board from the Warspite, did not the fly-boats instantly arrive; and my Lord Essex, who had greatly admired his gallantry throughout, for all that my Lord Howard of Walden and others of his company, being creatures of Cecil, did try to excite a jealousy in him, answered, in most friendly fashion, that whatever Raleigh would do, he, on his honor would second. This made Sir Walter row back to his ship with all the speed he could; but the other commanders taking this to be a signal to run in upon the enemy, made preparations on the instant, and before he could get on board several had passed him. This, however, Raleigh was not in the humor to allow of, and presently so manœuvred that he again had the first place, having anchored within twenty yards of the San Felipe, a large galleon of fifteen hundred tons, in such a position across the channel that no ship could pass him. Finding he was prevented by the wind from getting close enough to board, although his officers and men were monstrous eager for it, he laid out a warp "to shake hands with her," as he said; and those of the English fleet nighest to him following his example, the great galleons, in the utmost fright and hurry, slipped their anchors and run aground; and the soldiers and mariners were presently seen tumbling out of them into the sea by hundreds—some getting drowned, others choked in the mud, and a vast number mortally wounded.

Whilst Master Francis and Harry Daring were, with divers of the officers, observing this strange tumult from the the quarter deck of the Warspite, all at

once flames were seen issuing from the lower deck of the San Felipe.

"The villains have fired her!" exclaimed Harry, seeming to be greatly vexed about it. "By Gog and Magog, it be infamous so goodly a ship should be destroyed!"

He had scarce spoke when, with a wonderful explosion, the mainmast of the burning galleon shot up into the sky like an arrow, together with such a shower of blazing timbers that the air seemed on fire with it. With the huge ship were blown up vast numbers of the Spaniards, who had not got out of it in time, so that it did make a very hideous spectacle to see their bodiés scorched and blackened, falling into the sea in the midst of numberless burning planks, whereof some fell as far as the Warspite, and put her to great peril, which was promptly guarded against by the vigilance of the officers and crew.

"Alack, if there be not another of them a burning!" cried Harry, in greater vexation than before, pointing to a ship from which flames were seen to issue.

"'Tis one of their argosies!" observed Master Francis.

"And, o' my life, here is another with the like sign of fire in it," added his young friend. "It be monstrous, such goodly ships should be in the charge of such careless villains."

And, sure enough, another of the galleons and an argosie caught fire from the San Felipe, and the sight became more dreadful than ever, for the flames spread with wonderful fury; and whilst some of the Spaniards were clinging with frightful cries, to the rigging, many drowned themselves—some burned, some wounded, flung themselves into the sea, and strove to swim for their lives—some hung by ropes over the ship's side, up to the lips in water, but as the fire continued with increased fierceness, either the discharge of the great ordnance from the galleons as the flames reached them, or the blowing up of the ship, when the powder caught, soon put them out of their pain. By the marines and soldiers on board of the Warspite—indeed, by all throughout the fleet, this sight was looked upon with exceeding disappointment, for they expected to have made these monstrous vessels their prize; and the men and officers might be seen crowding wherever a sight could be got of the blazing ships, and expressing their lamentations with famous long faces. Sir Walter Raleigh had been carried below some short time before, to have his leg dressed, he having been wounded by a splinter; but whilst Harry Daring and Master Francis were looking so wofully upon the destruction of the galleons, there came an order from him to make haste after the other two, so that they should not escape, or be set on fire; and in an instant all was hurry and scurry in every part of the Warspite, the sailors running nimbly up the yards at the boatswain's call, to make such alterations in the sails as the sailing-master thought necessary; others cheerfully raising the anchor, shouting their pleasant chorus; the trumpets sounding for the gentlemen-volunteers to muster on deck in readiness to board the Spaniards, and the officers shouting their orders to get their men in proper order.

Three of the Warspite's largest boats were in the meantime being filled with soldiers and sailors, armed to the teeth, on the side of the ship farthest from the Spaniards; and whilst the Warspite, moved by the wind which at that time sprung up, bore gallantly down upon the huge galleons, the boats were rowed round the blazing vessels, avoiding as well as they might the showers of burning wood that fell into the sea, to board the galleons on the other side. Of one of these boats Harry Daring was the second in command; and he was all impatience to be at the enemy, and so encouraged the sailors that they strained every limb in plying of their oars, with such good effect that they soon got ahead of the other boats. When they were within musket range of the San Matéo—the nighest of the galleons, each of which were of twelve hundred tons burthen—a discharge of small arms from the lower decks of that ship killed his superior officer and several of his men.

"For death or victory!" shouted Harry, standing up as nigh the helm of the boat as he could, waving his hat over his head very gallantly. "Ply your oars merrily, my hearts of oak! Be ready with your pieces, soldiers, and pick me off these villains at the portholes and lower deck." He was answered by the cheers of his men, responded to by the cheering of those in the other boats, who seemed making every exertion to get up with him; and the soldiers under his command discharged their muskets with so true an aim, that presently there was scarce a Spaniard to be seen on that side of the ship.

"Now, my masters!" cried Harry Daring, as he drew his sword, "every man

that hath the honor of Old England at his heart, follow me." Again the men cheered with greater heart than ever,—each grasped his sword or his pike firmly, and prepared himself to follow to the death their gallant leader; but Harry, when he came to the ship's side and saw the huge wall of timber that rose before him, with scarce anything about it that presented a fair hold or footing, he felt a little puzzled what to be at, but hearing the rattle of the musketry and a huge shooting from the other side of the galleon, which proved she was being boarded by the Warspite, and observing that the other boats were close upon him, as the next wave dashed his boat against the San Matéo, and the sailors hooked her on, he boldly flung himself into an open porthole, rapidly followed by some score or two of his men, who came tumbling one after another, as if they had been shot out of a sack, the others thrusting in their pikes, harquebuses, swords, and such weapons as they had brought with them, as quick as they could.

Every man upon getting his footing looked for his weapon, and then for his enemies; but they found themselves in a low chamber, wherein there was just light enough to see a few Spaniards, some dead, some dying, and to discover by the furnishing of the place, that they had got into the victualling-room. None stopped to taste any of the good things that were around them; and Harry Daring seeing that all his men had their pieces loaded, and everything in proper order, commanded silence and great caution, made toward a door, upon opening which he saw instantly he was in the powder magazine, for there was a man with his back toward him, stooping over a barrel with a lanthorn at his side, near a basket nearly full of gunpowder. The man turned round upon hearing footsteps, and seeing who were behind him, seized upon the lanthorn, as if with the design of firing the powder, and so blowing the English, whom it is supposed he believed to be in possession of the ship, and the San Matéo up together, but before he could execute his villanous intention, Harry had run him through the body.

Here the young officer placed a guard to prevent all access to the powder, and then hastening out at another door, found himself in a broad passage, having doors on each side. Heeding none of these, and seeing a flight of steps a few yards ahead, he marched his men there. Whilst they were mounting these steps they spied a party of Spaniards coming down, carrying divers of their wounded, who no sooner caught sight of them than in a famous fright they dropped their burthens, and with terrible outcries took to running away as speedily as their legs could carry them. The noise brought some soldiers to see what was the matter; but a well-directed fire killed the most part and dispersed the rest in all directions.

"On, my gallant hearts, and this huge galleon shall be our own!" cried Harry Daring, pointing with his sword up the steps as he led the way a little in advance of the rest. His followers looked as if they were delighted to be so bravely led.

"There be none here likely to lag astern when such as you lead the way, Master Harry!" responded old Simon Mainsail, who was one of the foremost of the party. "Make all sail, my masters!" added he to the soldiers, "there be shoals of these villain Spaniards yet left for us to be a killing of." He was cheerfully answered by his companions, and all pressed forward after their gallant leader. Harry Daring presently found himself on the aft part of the lower deck. He gave a hasty glance around him, and noticed on his left the decks of the Warspite, with scores of her mariners and soldiers pouring down upon the galleon's fore-quarter, amid such a tumult of shouts, cries, groans, firing of pieces, and clashing of swords, betwixt them and the Spaniards, as made a complete Babel. On the opposite side he heard the cheers of those in the other boats, who were intent upon boarding on that quarter; where a company of soldiers were drawn up ready to resist them.

"A Raleigh! a Raleigh!" shouted Harry, leading on his men sword in hand, who charged the soldiers with such good will, and they being quite taken by surprise, that they made but a feeble resistance. Some threw down their arms and cried for quarter, and others fled hither and thither, wherever they fancied there was safety. The way being clear, Harry Daring and his party quickly enabled their comrades below to get footing on the deck, and up they came scrambling as fast as they could, to nigh upon a hundred in number. These then made for the fore parts of the galleon, where the Spaniards had crowded in great numbers, because there they were being boarded by the Warspite; and fell upon them with such vigor that they who could were glad to retreat to the upper decks; but now a panic seemed to have seized them,

and wherever the English appeared, as they soon did in some force, following up the advantage they had gained with such spirit as not to leave their enemies breathing time, they threw themselves into the sea in crowds, hoping to swim to the shore: and then it being given out amongst them that the galleon was taken, every one sought to save himself in the same manner, jumping out of the cabin windows, off the decks, and out of the portholes, like bees issuing from a hive.

The other galleon was carried in a similar manner. This struck a terror in the whole Spanish fleet. Many of the ships run ashore, the merchants made off for the roads of Puerto Real, and the galleys went creeping along the coast to where there was a bridge called the Puente de Zuazo. Thus was a glorious victory achieved over this formidable array upon land and water, with no more than seven ships on the part of the English; but great as the triumph was, it satisfied not the valiant hearts who had gained it. Master Francis in the Warspite, and Harry Daring in the boat, had been exceeding conspicuous in their attack upon the San Matéo, the former having disposed of himself very courageously in boarding the galleon from his own ship, and the latter having behaved as hath been described, in heading the party in the boat. It so happened that these two met sword in hand at the winning of the Spanish ship.

"Well!" exclaimed Harry, after shaking his friend heartily by the hand, and exchanging congratulations upon finding each other unhurt. "For exquisite fine fun commend me to the taking of a galleon."

"I can not say much for the fun, Harry," replied Master Francis. "But it certainly hath in it a wonderful excitement."

"Excitement!" cried the other, taking off his hat and wiping his hot forehead and face with his handkerchief. "I take it, excitement and exquisite fine fun be much the same thing."

"Hast lost many of your party?" inquired his friend.

"Not above five or six," answered Harry. "Old Simon Mainsail hath got shot through the arm, but he taketh it in very good heart now we have got the better of these villains. What a wonderful fine ship, though, this be! Never saw I anything of the like bigness—save the others. It be a thousand pities any *should have* been burned, for I doubt not we could have taken them all as easy as we have this."

Master Francis glanced at the dimensions of this gigantic vessel, and could not but acknowledge it merited all the admiration it had excited in his companion; but he soon turned to notice the appearance of the English and Dutch fleet in the bay. Those that had been engaged in the conflict bore on them numberless marks of its fury, and of these the Warspite seemed to be the most roughly handled of all, for she was shot about in every direction. In the distance were seen fly-boats and other vessels making for that part of the bay where the galleons were, and on the land side were the Spanish fleet, some dispersed, some run aground, some scorched and burning to the water's edge, and the San Matéo and San Andrés—another galleon of a like size, were in prize of the English. The soldiers of the Warspite were busy in securing their prisoners, and the mariners were going in parties under divers of their officers, to different parts of the ship to inspect their prize, and to guard against treachery on the part of the Spaniards. Master Francis and Harry Daring were upon the chief deck with a company of their men keeping guard upon such officers and soldiers of the Spaniards as they had secured; but this Master Francis was not allowed to do long, for there came a message from Sir Walter Raleigh to the intent, that he was to take a boat well manned, and make all speed to my Lord of Essex to acquaint him with the victory; and this he hurried to do.

Upon getting on board of the Repulse, which lay but a little way from the Warspite, he found my Lord Essex on the quarter-deck surrounded by his officers. He had seen Sir Walter's messenger before, both in Sir Walter's company, and when he had been so insultingly used of Queen Elizabeth, and liking his gallant appearance, and having heard much of his valiant behavior, he received him with a very pleasant courtesy: but when he heard the good news brought by him, it put him in as agreeable a humor as might be seen in the sociablest gentleman that ever lived; and gave instant orders for the landing of three thousand shot and pikemen to assault the town. Whilst the officers were getting their men into the boats, my Lord Essex detained Master Francis, inquiring of him particulars of the taking of the galleons; the which he answered modestly as regarded himself, but with plentiful com-

mendation of all others who had been engaged in that enterprise—the which seemed infinitely to the satisfaction of his noble listener.

"And how fareth my gallant friend, Sir Walter?" inquired he.

"He is badly hurt in the leg, my lord, from a splinter," replied Master Francis, "else doubtless would he have been here himself."

"He hath sent a right proper representative," said my lord. "Yet I hope his wound be one of no great moment, for I doubt not we shall have hot work presently, and we can not well spare so valiant a commander at so critical a time."

"If it please you, my lord, I will hasten back to the Warspite and tell him this," observed the young secretary. "I am quite sure he would like nothing so well as sharing, with your lordship, in the glory of this noble enterprise."

"Nay, Master Francis, I can not part with you just yet," replied Essex. "I will send a messenger to Raleigh, requiring of him to support me, if his hurt will let him, with what force he can get together: and state to him I have kept you to be officer of mine for the present."

"If it so please you, my lord," answered Master Francis, who was not dissatisfied with this design of the lord-general's. "Quite sure am I Sir Walter will hasten to support you, even if he be carried to the field, for I have oft heard him speak in so friendly a manner of your lordship's valiant disposition, that I am sure he hath that regard for you that would hasten him into any enterprise by which he might do you a service."

"Dost think so?" inquired my lord, looking into the other's face somewhat incredulously. "Hast heard him speak in such friendly manner as should warrant your saying this."

"That have I out of all manner of doubt," replied his companion.

"By this hand, I have heard the clean contrary," exclaimed Essex.

"Then such who told you, my lord, did most grossly belie him," answered Master Francis with such exceeding earnestness as carried conviction with it. "I have had better opportunities of knowing his true nature than have many, and I do affirm, it be utterly impossible he would not appreciate such qualities of behavior as your lordship possesses. Believe me, my lord, they have most vilely slandered him who have said otherwise, for one more ready to acknowledge the merit of another did I never know."

"'Tis likely enough," said the lord-general. "I can not imagine that one who hath behaved with the notable true valor he hath shown to-day, and on divers other occasions, should be given to such poor passions as envy and maliciousness."

"I will answer for his true-heartedness with my life!" replied his companion eagerly.

"I doubt you not at all, Master Francis," answered the other. "I shall think of him all the better for what you have said. But I pray you attend me in my barge. We will talk more on this matter when opportunity allows."

My Lord Essex then sending a messenger to Sir Walter Raleigh, proceeded to the barge which was waiting for him, in company with Master Francis; and the latter found himself putting to shore with three regiments of soldiers well appointed, filling a little fleet of barges and boats, rowed by the mariners. They landed in a sandy bay, close upon Fort Puntal, the garrison whereof waited not to come to blows with them, but abandoned it as speedily as they might upon their first appearance; whereupon Essex took possession of the fort, and finding he could only be annoyed from the mainland by the Puente de Zuazo, despatched at least one half of his force under able officers to take that bridge and at the same time sent a message to my lord admiral, to attempt the Mexican fleet lying at Puerto Real, to prevent their escape or burning; and then with the remainder of his regiments advanced in good order toward the town which lay at about three miles distance; but the road being all of a deep sliding sand, and the day hot and dry, made the march wonderfully fatiguing.

At some slight distance from the town they found a force of some five thousand foot and eight hundred horse, and although my Lord Essex had with him but fifteen hundred men in all, these attacked the Spaniards with such fierceness that they abode very little fighting, and did make their retreat with such speed that when the English came up to the walls of Cadiz they found the fugitives safe within them, and the gates closed. Whilst some of the assailants were striving to break through the gates, others, among whom was Master Francis, by means of an unfinished work, mounted the walls and leapt down as fast as they could; and the gate having been forced, the rest entered in good order, with their flags flying and

trumpets blowing, and charged at all they met. But now the struggle commenced; for they found every house turned into a fort, its flat roof having been made a magazine for weighty stones, which women as well as men let fall as they advanced—others of the Spaniards annoying them with firearms in the meanwhile.

Some houses were so offensive in this way that the lord-general was obliged to detach small parties of his men under commanders of most approved courage to take them by assault; and to one which seemed to be a church or religious house of some kind he sent Master Francis against, with a force of fifty men, whilst he sought to make his way to the market-place. The young commander, after an obstinate opposition, carried the place by assault, which proved to be a nunnery; for, upon his forcible entrance at the head of his men, he noticed the nuns flying before him, screaming and calling on the saints for assistance. Taking care that none such should be hurt, he followed on briskly till he came to the cloisters, and, greatly to his surprise, perceived at some little distance from him a man in the habit of an ecclesiastic dragging along by the hair of her head a female in the dress of a novice.

"Turn, villain!" cried Master Francis, hurrying toward him with his sword drawn. "Thou art but a coward to use a woman so. Let go thy hold or I will cut thee to the chine."

"Ha!" exclaimed the man turning toward him the well-known face of the Padre Bartolomé, looking more malignant than ever he had known it.

"Art *thou* here, accursed heretic! Then this to thy heart, wanton!" In the same moment, to Master Francis's horror and surprise, he saw the Jesuit snatch a dagger from his vest, and bury it in the breast of his female companion, who sunk with a scream at his feet; and then with a fiendish laugh was seeking to make off by a side passage; but the young officer was upon him too quickly.

"There, thou abhorred murderer, and damned treacherous villain!—take thy reward!" shouted he as he ran the priest through the body. The thrust seemed to have gone home; for the padre fell on his back and spoke not afterward, but fixed on his assailant so hateful a glance that the other was glad to turn away his eyes. His men had by this time come up, and looked wondering to see a nun slain by a priest.

"She moves!" cried their commander, hastening to the prostrate novice, who gave some evidence of life. "Mayhap the blow the villain gave her was not deadly." She lay on her side, with her long glossy hair streaming over her face, and a stream of blood issuing from a wound a little below her breast that had stained her garments down to her feet. Master Francis gently raised her from the ground, and gazing upon her pallid face, beheld there the idolized features of the mercer's daughter of Eastcheap.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

Lo! here the hopeless merchant of this loss,
With head inclined, and voice damned up with woes,
With sad set eyes, and wretched arms across,
And lips now waxen pale. SHAKSPEARE.

Oh, where have I been all this time?—how friended,
That I should lose myself thus desperately,
And none for pity show me how I wondered!
There is not in the compass of the light
A more unhappy creature. Sure, I am monstrous!
For I have done those follies, those mad mischiefs,
Would dare a woman. Oh, my loaden soul!
Be not so cruel to me; choke not up
The way to my repentance! Oh, my lord!
BEAUMONT AND FLETCHER.

"DISTURB not yourself, I pray you!" exclaimed Master Francis earnestly, as he bent with an anxious countenance over the form of Joanna. She now reclined upon a pallet in a narrow cell, furnished only with a small table, on which appeared to be a missal or breviary, a rosary, and a crucifix; and he was sitting on a chair close beside her, holding of one of her hands. Her face looked marvellous pale—that settled pallor that betokeneth approaching dissolution; and her eyes, though still turned toward him with all the affectionate tenderness that had once dwelt in them, looked with wonderful languor and uneasiness, and lacked much of that extreme brilliancy by which they had used to be distinguished.

"The chirurgeon hath told me I have but a few hours to live," replied the mercer's daughter in a low voice. "And I would fain devote such short time as is allowed me to make my peace with God and my conscience, by a confession which methinks be equally necessary for you to hear as for me to state."

"Nay, trouble not yourself about the matter now, I implore you," cried her lover. "I would not have you make yourself miserable at such a time by allusion to what I would willingly wish buried in oblivion."

"'Tis imperative," answered the other firmly. "Justice calls for it. I feel within me an influence that maketh it a thing absolute and not to be set aside. I conjure you listen. Hear me, Francis; and hear me with whatsoever patience you can bring to the hearing; for, indeed, the tale I have to tell requireth much endurance of you."

Master Francis made no further objection; and with considerable wonder and some curiousness attended to the following narration:—

"I trace all the evil that hath happened to me to the want of a mother's careful control in my bringing up," said his companion. "She died in my early childhood. I was thus left to the entire care, if care it might be called, of my other parent, who soon showed how unfit he was for any such duty. Being considered a child of some comeliness I was ever petted by him—the commendation I received of strangers making him proud of my appearance. I heard naught from him and his associates save such flattery as taught me to imagine there could be nothing in the world of so much value as the attractions of the person. Vanity early took possession of my character; and the love of admiration which it engendered grew the stronger the more it was fed. I got but little education deserving of the name, save occasional schooling in the neighborhood, which when I liked not I gave up, and when I fancied I took to again; but I quickly acquired all sorts of cunning and deceit, from mingling with my father and his chief friends, who looked upon craft as nothing else but cleverness; and my passions which were exceeding violent even when young, were fostered in every conceivable way by the indulgence and harshness equally misapplied.

"As I grew toward womanhood, and my features and person began to assume something of that appearance they afterward acquired, the admiration I excited became greater, and my vanity the more intense. I lacked not suitors: no girl could be more followed. I was the favorite of all the apprentices round about; and many an honest citizen's son vowed he loved me dearer than all the world beside. My father had early impressed me with a distaste for becoming a wife, drawing fearful pictures of the misery, drudgery, and insignificance of such women as married; and then, in more glowing colors, painting the consequence and happiness enjoyed by a girl of wit enough to draw plenty of fine gallants round her all ready to be her slaves, that I thought only of how I might place myself in the enviable situation of the latter. I liked flattery too well to turn away from it, let it come from any, so I encouraged all who spoke after such a fashion as long as it pleased me so to do; and if they became importunate, or pressed me on the subject of marriage, gave them such answers as might hold them on, if I liked not to give them up, or send them away if I cared not for their company. As for studying the feelings of any of them, I never knew of such a thing. Being perfectly selfish myself in these instances, I believed all to be much like me, and cared nothing when I found it otherwise; for when I heard that any worthy youth had taken to heart my behavior, it moved me not at all: indeed, so utterly heartless have I been, when I had, by the cruel disappointments I put them to, reduced some to be nigh unto death's door, I have boasted to my female confidante of the time that so many were dying for me. In fact, I looked upon such things as great triumphs that showed the power of my beauty.

"That you must sufficiently despise me for conduct so despicable I feel assured. In truth, I do despise myself most heartily; and the only excuse I can bring forward in extenuation of such baseness is, that it was taught me, and encouraged by those who ought to have inculcated in me honester principles. I may add, so little seemed my father to care for my morals, that he scrupled not in allowing me to associate with women living in great disrepute, if they happened to be good customers to him; and would have such to dwell with him in the house with as little shame or compunction. In fact, he cared for nothing save the increasing of his gains, so that he might have such companions as he chose, and live in continual feasting and jollity. It so happened that the selfishness which made me so regardless of the feelings of others whilst I could gratify my own vanity, secured me from anything like moral danger. I knew not anything that did deserve the name of love—whatever I might have professed—so that the ardor of the most devoted lover might with as much profit have been cast on a stone as on me.

"The admiration of apprentices and young citizens soon ceased to content me. Many brave gallants and young noblemen coming to my father's shop, and getting

sight of me, liked me, or professed to like me, with so monstrous an affection, that they were ever besieging me with the sweetest of flatteries; and my father finding his advantage in it, afforded them every facility for seeing me when any of them had a mind. The report of my comeliness brought others; and all, to get my father's assistance toward having speech with me, had dealings with him, whereby he got great gains. Here then, was I, a woman—young, and, by report, lovely—exposed to all the arts of some of the most dissolute men about the court. They tempted me with costly presents—they strove to cajole me with the most delusive speeches; but I had too much cunning not to perceive their designs; and though it did delight my vanity famously to be so admired by so many brave gallants, and my selfishness allowed me to take freely what they freely gave, to none did I give better encouragement than an occasional caress—the which I had ever been taught to consider as a thing of no sort of moment.

"This continued till I knew you, and then my whole being seemed changed of a sudden—the barren rock seemed struck by some holy hand, and there gushed forth a stream of the purest and sweetest feeling. Before, everything was for myself—now, everything was for you. Although the love of admiration was implanted too deeply in my disposition to be readily eradicated, I made it subservient to the most generous purposes. I learned how you were situated with your miserly kinsman—I noticed your inability to supply that thirst for information which distinguished you. Love not only taught me liberality, but instructed me to use such delicacy in the application of it, as enabled me to supply all your wants after such a fashion as could be least objectionable to one of so modest and retiring a nature as I found you to be. You were then but a mere youth, and I a woman of some six or seven years your senior; the delight I felt in affording you facilities for improving yourself in study, and the gratification that arose in me as I observed the rapid progress of your mental faculties in consequence, I am altogether unable to express; but the affection I felt was of so different a sort from anything I have heard or read of, that I can not fancy such was ever felt before.

"The fact was, you seemed so entirely thrown on my protection—there was such a sweet purity and entire excellence in your disposition, and you were so young, affectionate, and perfectly free from guile, that the feelings with which I regarded you mingled the deep devotion of a fond woman for the object of her early idolatry, with the sweet tenderness of a mother for her most cherished offspring: but when in the overpowering eloquence of your full-heartedness you began to pour forth those passionate ecstasies so delicious for an attached woman to find she has excited in her lover, and developed those bountiful gifts of mind you were possessed of, in writing in my commendation the most endearing and graceful poetry, I have known transports so sweet and refreshing, that all my heart melted in my eyes, and I then felt I could endure every evil, and would willingly make any sacrifice the securing of your happiness required. Oh! would that these exquisite sympathies had continued their generous influence! Would that they had destroyed in me that wretched vanity and contemptible cunning, which, to my shame be it spoken, were called into action as frequently as ever!

"'Tis true my love of admiration still allowed me to listen to the flatteries of every gallant I met, with a sensible satisfaction, and put forth numberless little arts—I then thought nothing of, but now consider sufficiently contemptible—to excite their adulation; but though I liked the flattery well enough, it was rare I did not despise the flatterer, and easily perceiving the selfish object had in view, it was not possible I should care much to excite hopes in them I never meant they should see realized: but I did more than this, I encouraged all such as were so inclined, to the giving of me presents, the which, as soon as might be necessary, were applied to the sole profit and advantage of one, whose profit and advantage I had ever at heart."

"Gained I what friendly assistance I had of you by such means?" inquired Master Francis, looking with infinite seriousness.

"I pray you disturb me not with questions," replied the mercer's daughter faintly, "I have much yet to say, and I feel exceeding faint;—as though it were not possible for me to go through it all. But I must on. Ah! where was I?" asked she, and hesitated a moment, and then proceeded. "Suffice you to know I had no other means of doing you such service as it was my good fortune to do, for of my father's bounty had I never known, he scarce letting me have enough for mine own necessities, and seeming to

care for nothing but constant indulgence of himself in riotous ill-living. Though I had no scruples myself about procuring sums of money this way, knowing the thorough worthlessness of nearly all those from whom I had it—indeed it did appear to me a laudable application of what was offered with evil intentions—I had looked so well into your disposition, I knew you would not tolerate such a thing on any account, and I therefore did put forth all manner of artifices to deceive you, not only as to the source whence I derived what gains I had, but in everything relating to my true character. I strove all I could to keep from your knowledge that I knew of any such gallants, and ever behaved to you in such a sort as might convince you I cared for pleasing none other than yourself: for I had noted you to be sudden and of a quick temperament, and I did hugely suspect, gained you any knowledge of how I was proceeding, you would think the worst of me, and quarrel on the instant.

"About this time I made the acquaintance of a gallant of exceeding prepossessing countenance and manner, and of a right noble person, whom I had met at Paris garden, a place my father often took me to. He appeared, by his look and language, to be foreign-born; and there was about him so courteous a dignity, that I doubted not he was also nobly born. Finding his advances not ill received, at the conclusion of the entertainment he must needs be seeing of me home, to the which my father not only made no objection, seeing that he was gallantly apparelled, but presently took himself away, and left us together. His admiration was evident, yet he spoke not, save with exceeding respect, and did conduct himself with a gentleness of behavior that flattered me more than all. This meeting led to private interviews at my father's dwelling, throughout which he behaved with the same delicate courteousness as at first. When our intimacy had more ripened, I learned from him, in confidence, that he was a Spanish noble, styled Don Santiago de Luz, though he called himself Count de Blanc on our first acquaintance; and he further stated, that being a Spaniard, he could only remain in England in disguise, and therefore had passed himself for a Frenchman, which, by his skill in languages, he could readily do. At one time after this he came to me apparently in some little alarm, stating that suspicions of his true character having been excited in some of the queen's government, he could not visit me unless it was by stealth, after dark, for he found a watch was set upon him, that made him not inclined to stir out in the day.

"In consequence of his saying this, I let him in at what hour of the night he chose to come, and very willingly too, for the confidence he placed in me I found agreeable to my vanity; and the sweet courteousness of his conduct, and his avowal of the grateful sense of the favor, he was pleased to call it, I did him, were equally acceptable to me. All this time he spoke not a word of love—no sort of passion was exhibited in his behavior—he made me no costly presents—he breathed no delusive flatteries; his bearing had in it more of the attached and respectful friend than the gay and noble gallant. He was ever the same mild and gracious gentleman, delighting me with most entertaining discourse of the foreign countries he had visited, and seeming to have so serious an interest in my welfare that he took to teaching of me the Spanish language, as he said it might be of advantage to me hereafter. Though I could not doubt of his admiration, it was shown in too pleasing and too respectful a manner to cause the slightest wish in me for its discontinuance, or create a single apprehension for its consequences.

"At no time felt I anything like affection for this Don Santiago. I liked his society well enough. I felt sufficiently pleased that so noble a gentleman as he seemed to be, should pay me the attention he did; and having been brought up in the way I had, I could see no harm in allowing of his visits, even though I was professing, and did feel, for you a most fond and entire devotedness. About this time I met Master Shakspeare, though I knew not who he was till some days after. I had behaved to him much as I had done to other gallants that sought me; but he, upon finding I was the Joanna whom he knew you to feel such true and exclusive affection for, did reason with me very seriously on the injustice and impropriety of my proceedings; but selfishness and vanity had taken too firm hold of my nature to allow myself to be in the wrong; and I went on as before, caring only to keep from your knowledge that I associated with any other than yourself.

"There were times when I felt I was unworthy of you. For you were so pure-minded, and perfectly free from craftiness of every kind, and of so different a sort to such men as I had had acquaintance with, that I looked up to you as to a su-

perior creature; and the fear of losing you not only led me into the practice of a thousand deceits to disguise what I imagined you would take alarm at, in my natural character; bnt I deceived you to the same extent in other things, that I fancied the knowing of might lessen the affection you had for me. I would restrain my feelings as much as I could, and appear to you no other than a kind protectress; believing, from my experience of lovers, that but little encouragement bindeth the attachment stronger, whilst the appearance of much fondness hazardeth an early satiety: and when I found you, as you oft did, lavishing on me, with so bountiful a heart as you possessed, the affectionate impulses of your impassioned nature, I checked their too evident warmth, fearing that so great a fire could not but quickly burn itself out. So absolute an effect had your youth and innocency of soul on my maturity and great knowingness, that when enjoying such sweet endearments with you as I sometimes would allow, I have felt myself a different being—all selfishness, all vanity, all deceit, all cunning, seemed to have left me—I have wept like a child, and loved with all the entireness of a woman's devotion."

Here the mercer's daughter paused for a few seconds, as if her feelings would not allow her utterance. Master Francis had listened with considerable disquietude to the account she gave of the vanity of her behavior; but for all this, at her stopping in her narration, he, mayhap involuntarily, pressed the hand he held in his own.

"Alack! it lasted not long!" exclaimed Joanna. "The next hour I might be with some gallant or another, as heartless and as full of artifice as the meanest wretch that breathed. One thing only did I do, and continue, that proved I was not entirely regardless of what was due to you. I never would suffer your caressing of me when any other had done so. However earnestly you pressed it, and however greatly you took the refusal to heart, I could on no account endure your sweet endearments should fall where the idle or the profligate had lately sought a hurried gratification. I endured such from others when it could not be avoided, partly because I had been taught to think of it lightly, and partly not by refusing to seem rude, and so offend such gallants as sought it of me; by which means, because they were his chiefest customers, I should hugely have angered my father. They afforded me no pleasure beyond the satisfying of my self-love at seeing nobles and princely gentlemen seeming to be so intent upon having such a favor of me; but on receiving such precious gifts from you, all that was good of me was stirred into exercising of its influence, and I felt such exquisite enjoyment as I have found in naught else in the world.

"I come now to the fatal hour of our first and last quarrel. I had rejoiced in your good fortune in meeting with such a friend as the noble Sir Walter Raleigh, and however I might in my letters to you have seemed to lack affection, I loved you as tenderly as ever, and wished for nothing so much as your prosperous voyage and speedy return. One luckless day I had gone, by desire of my father, to the house of my Lord Cobham, with an account for payment, my father having found out that when any of these noble gallants settled not their bills as quickly as he wished, he had only to send me, and they not choosing to appear niggardly before a woman they pretended to have great admiration of, paid presently, and with some show of handsomeness. My Lord Cobham having done what was required of him, did himself courteously conduct me to a door leading from his dwelling into the gateway, where perchance you were at the time. There he would needs have a kiss of me before parting, and though I made some resistance to him, it was more for form sake than aught else, for I cared not much about the matter. By what dropped from you afterward, it was plain you heard us; and you had also gained knowledge of my allowing of Don Santiago's visits at night, and letting him out in the early morning, which moved you to say the harsh things of me you did.

"My passions had ever been uncontrolled, and when you spoke in such cruel language as you used on my return from my Lord Cobham's, it stung me to the quick. Selfish as I was, vain as I was, deceitful as I was, I was not the base thing you would have made me out. It did enrage me mightily to hear myself so abused, and all that was vile in my nature rose up in arms to revenge the wrong. But what then took place requireth not further allusion. Bitterly repented I afterward; and when I found that I had lost you, I woke at once to a sense of the shamefulness of my behavior, and felt in my inmost heart the truth of all Master Shakspeare had stated. The violent fury of my passions brought

me to the brink of the grave; and my slow recovery gave me ample time and opportunity for the examination of myself. Right heartily did I then despise those false dealings by which I had repaid your sincerity; and yet, though knowing how worthless I had been, you were so completely the object of my best sympathies, I could not give you up without a struggle. I felt you were necessary to my existence. I would have gone barefooted over the world to have obtained your pardon. I, the proud, the selfish, the heartless Joanna, would have lowered myself to any humility, and sacrificed everything most dear to woman, to have been restored to your affections. Ah me! all was unavailing. You rejected every overture—you would not forgive; and I was left with a despairing heart and a broken spirit."

"Indeed, I have forgiven you long since," replied Master Francis, kindly. "And now I do consider myself much to blame in having so spoken to you without better warrant. Dear Joanna, believe me it is all forgiven." And again the hand was tenderly pressed.

"Hush!" hastily exclaimed his companion. "Call me not 'dear.' But everything seemeth to press hurriedly upon me now. I can scarce collect my thoughts in order. Still I will proceed as I best may. Let me return to Don Santiago. I saw him not till I was convalescent, when he seemed so exceeding concerned at my illness, and expressed himself so much more like a friend than a lover on the subject of my evident unhappiness, that after infinite pressing on his part to know the cause of it, I told him so much of our attachment, and your behavior as I thought necessary, and I conjured him to assist in endeavoring to bring about a reconciliation betwixt us. This he readily promised to do; but at the same time expressed monstrous indignation at your conduct—vowing you knew not how to appreciate so rich a prize—a prize worthy of the proudest noble in the land—and much more to the same purpose. He went with a message from me, requesting of an interview, and returned, stating that you rejected such a proposal with scorn and contempt—that you spoke most disgracefully of me; and that he had found out, upon inquiry, you were diligently seeking the affections of a fair damsel in your neighborhood."

"I saw no Don Santiago!" exclaimed Master Francis in some surprise and indignation. "Never spoke I in my life to any one disgracefully of you—and never have I sought the affections of any save yourself."

"I believe you," replied Joanna. "Don Santiago now showed his admiration of me more conspicuously; and spoke with such persuasiveness of the injustice I was doing myself by thinking of one whose conduct proved he deserved not the slightest consideration, whilst some of worthier station, who would be but too happy to show the earnest love they felt for the marvellous excellence I possessed, obtained no sort of regard, that I strove to care not for you, and endeavored to make myself content with the increasing devotion and affectionate attentions of this foreign gallant. Don Santiago had hitherto behaved himself with an appearance of so much delicacy and disinterestedness, that I felt myself perfectly safe with him at all times. 'Tis true, his language became more fond, and his manner toward me more impassioned, but his love came mingled with such exceeding respect, that I could never imagine any sinister intention in him. This good opinion of him led me to allow him such favors as I had allowed others. Ever the most honorable sentiments were on his lips, and his look and bearing were of such a sort as seemed to the full to express the same noble meaning. I suffered his frequent endearments without the slightest alarm. This apparent yielding of myself, the more emboldened him in his advances. Alack, I knew not the villain he was! I had no thought of the danger I was exposed to. All looked honor and sincerity of heart. All breathed of love and the very deepest respectfulness. Miserable degraded wretch that I became, little knew I, with all my cunning, what monstrous craft was arrayed against me; or how soon it might come to pass, that she who had duped so many should herself be the completest wretchedest dupe that ever breathed! I fell—the victim of such base treachery as I dreamed not the existence of.

"Not by any consent of mine own!" exclaimed Joanna more vehemently, as Master Francis drew away his hand and averted his face. "I thought not—suspected not the nearness of such dishonor. 'Twas a vile trick—an unmanly stratagem—a very atrocious piece of villany!"

"Francis!" she cried with increased wildness, her eyes lighted up with such extreme excitement they looked more brilliant than ever they were; and by clutching at his arm convulsively, raising

herself from her pallet till her head came on a level with his shoulder. "Francis! I feel the hand of death is on my heart. I could not tell a lie at such a time. On my soul—now going to judgment—there was a drug administered in some wine without my privity, and I woke from the torpor it put me into, to find myself in mine own eyes as loathsome as a leper. I pray you, in pity's sake, think not so meanly of me as I see you do. Francis! Francis! this is worse than death!" Saying this in the most heart-moving accents, she sunk on her face upon the pallet; and nothing was heard from her but violent deep sobs, at intervals of a minute or so, that seemed as if they were rending of her heart in twain.

Master Francis had listened to what hath been stated, with a flushed and uneasy countenance; and the quick heaving of his breast and perceptible loudness of his breathing expressed how much he had been moved by the narration. His look, however, had more of pain than distrust in it; and, suddenly, as if he could bear it no longer, he buried his face in his hands and groaned aloud.

"Joanna!" he exclaimed, after a silence of several minutes, looking upon her with a grave and melancholy gaze. "It can not be unknown to you, that I loved you in all truth and honesty, and believed you to be the perfectest creature that ever blessed this earth. You appeared of a nature so bountiful in goodness, that I regarded you as a ministering angel sent to be my constant guide and protectress, and I could look forward to no felicity you did not either share or create. My happiness depended on my thinking as I did of you. The moment I discovered or believed you to be other than I had thought, there seemed to be nothing in store for me but wretchedness. Still, however, angered as I was by your behavior, and miserable at heart at it, I have oft entertained a hope that, bad as appearances might have been, at some time or other you would prove yourself guiltless of any dishonesty. To find you untainted was all I prayed for. The consequence of this feeling of mine maketh what I have heard to shock me greatly. It is intelligence of so horrible a sort, that it hath come like a withering blast upon me, and taketh from me all sense and sympathy. But I will not—I can not dwell upon it. Proceed with your narration, I pray you."

Joanna did not answer on the instant, and when she did turn her face toward him, it was more pale than before, and was impressed with such anguish as was pitiful to look on.

"You can not condemn me more than I condemn myself," she replied, speaking as if with some difficulty. "As soon as I became aware of what had happened, I grew frantic with rage and horror; and a sense of shame fell upon me that weighed me to the dust. I saw in a moment, I was irrevocably lost to all honorable affection, and dared no longer regard you with the slightest feeling of love. Don Santiago strove all he could to mollify my anger: and made such protestations and excuses, and seemed to regret so exceedingly what, as he said, the ungovernableness of his passion had led him into, that he pacified me in some measure. But what was I to do? You were lost to me for ever; and when the Spaniard pressed me to accompany him to his own country, I thought now it must be all one where I went; and as he earnestly swore he would make me his wife on our arrival in Spain, I trusted in his honor, and embarked on board a ship bound, as I thought, for that country. We had not been out at sea many days, when the behavior of Don Santiago toward me completely changed. From mild and respectful, he gradually became haughty and uncivil. He rated me for my melancholy as if it was a crime; and continually got into monstrous passions of jealousy, swearing I was ever thinking of you. One day he completely threw off the mask. He acknowledged he was no Don Santiago de Luz—he confessed that the ship was not bound for the Spanish coast, and bade me think not of marriage with him, for he was a Jesuit. He was Padre Bartolomé."

"Ha!" exclaimed Master Francis, starting up with his face famously flushed. "I *had* seen him then before. I remember me now, he did call upon me at Sherborne, but with no such name as Don Santiago, and when I saw the villain at Trinidad, I had some faint recollection of his face, but could not call to mind where I had met with him." Master Francis paced the narrow cell for a minute or so, looking very disturbed and angry.

"But the caitiff hath gone to his account," said he, as he flung himself back into his seat. "'Tis useless allowing of his villany to move me. Proceed you, Joanna, with what remaineth to be told."

"I afterward learned from him and from others, that he was a sort of a spy in the service of the Spanish government,"

continued the mercer's daughter. "For this employment his wonderful talent in dissimulation, and great accomplishments, must have well fitted him. He cloaked his real character under so fair an exterior, that there could be no suspecting any craft or treachery. Having managed to obtain intelligence of Sir Walter Raleigh's expedition in search of the famous El Dorado, which he presently forwarded to Spain, he engaged the ship in which he had put me, and sailed direct to South America, and gave the governor of Guiana the most minute information of its force, and plotted with him for the destruction of all concerned in it. As soon as I knew him for what he was, I hated him with all my heart and soul, and the more earnestly for his throwing out mysterious hints of your speedy death, with such apparent satisfaction, as none but so black a villain could have known. Wishing to be quit of such a wretch, I endeavored to make a friend of Don Antonio de Berrio, in whose guardianship I had been left during a temporary absence of the padre, and who quickly professed himself my lover. From him I learned the arrival of the expedition, and that you were of the party. On that very evening the city was taken by assault, and I found you were an inmate in the same house with me. The padre had concealed himself in my apartment, vowing the horriblest vengeance, and believing him capable of doing any villany he had a mind, I kept a strict eye on his movements. I was fortunate enough to come upon him as he was about to stab you in your sleep, and quickly forced him to leave the room with his wickedness unperpetrated. Upon finding you once again before me, and in the great joy I felt at having rescued you from death, there was a sudden rush at my heart of such powerful sweet feelings, that you seemed to me again as we were once to each other; and I was just on the point of clasping you in my arms to pour out the fulness of my heart upon your breast, when I remembered the degraded thing I had become—I shrunk from you in the wretched belief that my touch would be pollution, and with a racking anguish turned away and left the room. Alack! alack! the misery I then felt, language hath no name for."

Joanna was for some time unable to proceed, and seemed to breathe with exceeding difficulty: at last, as with a great effort, she thus continued her narration:

"I escaped the same night with the padre to the mainland. We sojourned with others who had fled from the island, at a village nigh upon the Orinoco, and seemed to be in safety and in some comfort; but one day, the padre having gone early with a party to a village some leagues off, to procure provisions for our little settlement, there came back one of them with the news, that whilst they were carrying off a young Englishman the padre had set them upon, they had been attacked by a tribe of Indians, and all killed save only the padre and the captive Englishman, who had been taken up the country by the natives; and the fugitive had escaped only because he was at some distance when they made the onslaught, and on the first alarm climbed up a tree. On their departure he caught one of the horses that had strayed from the rest and made for the settlement with all the speed he could. I was sure, from the description of the Spaniard, whom I questioned closely, that it was you Padre Bartolomé had sought to entrap, and the Indians had now hold of. I was in such fear for your safety I scarce knew what to do; but expecting some pursuit would be made, I got of an Indian woman, to whom I had done some kindness, a dress such as she usually wore, and staining myself so as to be of her color, I started under her guidance to the village whence you had been taken, having got all the information I could of the Spaniard and others, of the direction the Indians were supposed to have gone, intending to offer myself as a guide to such as would be looking for you. I found your true friend and the young Indian; and desiring not to be known of the first, and much liking the appearance of the other, I told the prince, under promise of secresy, such of my story as I had a mind to tell. My confidence had all the effect I wished. Pomarra, during my stay with him, treated me with such true respect and delicate courtesy as might have put to shame the behavior of the most finished gallant. What followed is sufficiently known to you.

"I did all I could to keep myself from discovery. It was a delight to me, however little I might deserve it, to be so near you, and to know of your safety. I shrunk instinctively from such familiarity as might betray me; but hearing you speak of me as you did took away from me every faculty I possessed, and on my swooning I was discovered. I left you as quickly as I could after that, and hastened to our little settlement, where I

had left what property I had. This taking with me, I proceeded to a part of the coast where I was told a small vessel was lying at anchor. I saw the captain: his ship was bound for France. It mattered not to me where I went so that I escaped from that villain Spaniard. I bargained for a passage, and the very first person I met on board was Padre Bartolomé, who had engaged the vessel for his own use.

"It would be to no good purpose to tell you how he misused me, or to say how I hated him, or how I strove to get myself away from his villanous company; but wherever he went he seemed to have such wonderful influence that all I did was only to put myself the more in his power. We stayed in France but a short time, and then proceeded to England, where we lived at the French ambassador's, with whom the padre appeared on marvellous good terms. He passed me off as his sister; but kept me under such jealous watch, that I never went out of the house, save once to go to the play with him. There I saw you again, and marked you well; but though I noticed your uneasiness, and the interest you took in the play, I had no suspicion of the cause till I gathered from the signs and looks of those around you that you were the author. The next day we took ship for Spain, and, after a prosperous voyage landed at Cadiz. Here the padre left me to the care of some in whom he placed confidence, and went to Madrid; but I managed to escape from them, and took refuge in this convent, wherein I intended passing my life in meditation and prayer. The Jesuit, on his return, finding me escaped, lacked no exertion to discover my retreat, the which he at last found; and my noviciate not having expired, he sought by the most moving entreaties to get me to desist from my purpose; and these availing him nothing, took to the horriblest threats, which I regarded with the like indifference, bidding him be gone and trouble me no more. He went, but during your assault upon the city, he got admittance into the convent, and finding me out, thinking none would heed him in the tumult, as I treated him with the scorn and hatred he deserved, he took to dragging me by force in the way you saw.

"I care not for having fallen by his dagger," continued Joanna, her voice getting fainter every moment. "'Twas a mercy rather than a punishment. I doubt much had I lived I should have done any credit to the whole community among whom I had taken refuge; for I found, though I strove ever so, I could not become so religious minded as seemed necessary. My meditations were all of you—my prayers were all for you. Yet, in the solitary contemplation of my own unhappiness, I had ever one consolation. It was the belief that you were in the enjoyment of that prosperity your many excellences deserved. Francis, this was indeed a pleasure! I could think of no other pleasant thing. Miserable and degraded as I was—an outcast and an alien—with a mind almost maddened, and a breaking heart—after wearing out the long night on my knees, beseeching every blessing might be showered upon you, Francis!—I felt the sweet conviction steal upon me that you would be—*must* be—happy; and it brought with it a comfort that left me naught to wish for but the grave."

Master Francis again took the hand he had before held, and his eyes looked humid as he turned his gaze upon his companion. Although Joanna seemed quite exhausted, and was gasping for breath at the close of her speech, the moment she felt his hand pressing her own, she snatched it to her lips, and covered it with her caresses, with such sobs and tears as would have moved a heart of stone. It was evident he was also in tears. He looked a moment irresolute; and then, as though the influence of old impressions were not to be resisted, suddenly bent down and caught her up in his arms. "Francis!—*dear* Francis!" she exclaimed in a faint voice. "Now I also am happy!"

Master Francis was too much moved to speak. Indeed, his feelings were of that tumultuous character that left him not even the ability to think. He was aware only that the heart of the being he had loved was beating against his breast, and remembered only the many noble things she had done in his behalf. For a few minutes he lost all sense of surrounding objects; and was first awakened to consciousness upon finding that Joanna's heart did *not* beat against his own. On unclosing of his arms, he saw at a glance he had embraced the dead!

CHAPTER XXXVII.

Who dares, who dares,
In purity of manhood stand upright,
And say, This man's a flatterer?

SHAKSPEARE.

And now I will unclasp a secret book,
And to your quick conceiving discontents
I'll read you matter deep and dangerous;
As full of peril and advent'rous spirit,
As to o'erwalk a current roaring loud,
On the unsteadfast footing of a spear.

IBID.

He endures beyond
The sufferance of a man.

MASSINGER.

THE English armament was now on its homeward voyage, being nigh upon Cape St. Vincent. The victors brought with them, beside the two galleons and the spoil of Cadiz, divers wealthy prisoners, and forty hostages, for the due performance of the ransom; and afterward having landed at a town called Faro, which they took, did bring away with them the library of a famous ecclesiastic —one Osorio, Bishop of Sylves. Master Francis and Harry Dutting were sitting together in a secluded part of the main deck. There was, as often happened, a marked contrast between the two; the face of the former being paler than usual, and of a settled melancholy, whilst the features of the other were lighted up with a wonderful animation. Harry carried his arm in a sling, showing that he had a wound of some kind; but to look at the cheerfulness of his countenance, none would have believed it was any great matter—yet it had been cut to the bone with a halberd. It appeared he was relating to his friend what he had seen of the taking of Cadiz.

"It was a horrible march that over the sands," exclaimed Harry; "but at last, I being with Sir Walter, who was carried on men's shoulders till my lord-admiral lent him a horse, entered the town with our colors flying very gallantly, and soon came up with my Lord Essex, who was fighting in the market-place surrounded by enemies. As ill luck would have it, the villains made but little resistance after we came. I managed however to get into the thick of the fight before it was all over, and got me this thrust in my arm; whereupon I paid the caitiff who did it so handsomely. I doubt not he was as thoroughly satisfied as ever a dead Spaniard could be. The town now being our own, Sir Walter, who had hitherto rode with us on horseback, suffering much from his wound, returned to the fleet, but I was left with the rest to help keep possession of our conquest. Then came the sack. Now I did think the taking of the galleon was as exquisite fine fun as could be known; but the sacking of Cadiz beateth it hollow. Methinks all the houses in the place in the twinkling of an eye were turned inside out into the streets; and our men began a plundering away like a troop of half-starved mice just broke into a malthouse. There was such shouting and laughing as I never heard before;—some guzzling rare wines with as little discretion as an apprentice might swallow small beer—others devouring the choicest cates as greedily as a litter of pigs taketh to a feed of grains. They who cared not so much for eating, stuffed their trunks with whatsoever valuables came nighest to hand, and then filled their hats, and then loaded themselves with as much as they could carry. Perchance coming away and meeting with something they liked better, they disgorged what they had about them, and took to burthening themselves with the choicer commodity. Here you might see one fellow wrapt up in the costliest silks knocking out the head of a cask of raisins, and a little way on, another in a famous robe of gold brocade, diligently sucking of a wine-barrel. In an incredible short time the principal streets were covered with almonds and olives, figs, raisins, and spices, which were kicked about and trampled under foot, and mixed with streams of wine and oil, left running out of casks that had been broken to see what they contained: and upon these were bales of stuffs and articles of furniture of great value, that had been abandoned for less bulky or more attractive plunder. But the next day I saw a sight that put me into such a humor I could take pleasure in nothing."

"What was that, Harry?" inquired Master Francis.

"This was it," replied the other. "Sir Walter had sent at day-break into the town to get orders from the lord-general that he might go and secure the Indian fleet—which might easily have been done —but he got no answer; and whilst my lord admiral and others were disputing with the Spaniards about the ransoming of these ships, the monstrous horrible villains set fire to them all; and there were burned nearly forty sail of as excellent fine vessels as Christian might wish to see, laden with choice merchandise for Mexico. Well, it be a certain sure thing that they who set them afire will get a like burning themselves some of these days—that's one comfort."

His companion did not answer to this. Indeed he was too intent upon his own contemplations to pay it any regard.

"Hast noticed this Colonel Harquebus,

Master Francis, that Sir Walter hath taken so much to lately?" asked Harry Daring.

"In truth no, Harry," answered his friend; "I can not say I have taken of him any great notice."

"Methinks he behaveth exceeding uncivil to you," observed his companion.

"I have noted no such behavior in him," replied Master Francis.

"Why he looketh at you with a perpetual frown," added Harry; "and when he, in company with Sir Walter, passed us to-day on the quarter-deck, I heard him mutter the words 'paltry secretary,' with a visage sour enough to turn all the wine in the ship into verjuice."

"There can be no harm in that," observed his companion, carelessly.

"No harm!" cried Harry Daring, in some astonishment. "Let any of my quality frown at me, or say or do anything despisingly, I warrant you I could not be easy till I picked a quarrel with the varlet, and taught him to carry his sweetest looks next time we came in sight of each other. Now you be fully as good a gentleman as is any Colonel Harquebus of them all, and next time he seeketh to put on you any such indignity, I would have you call him a villain, and if he draweth upon that, have at him, and show him what brave stuff you be made of."

"That I can never do, Harry," replied Master Francis: "Colonel Harquebus is so far my superior, as to render such a course out of the question. Besides he hath done me no offence, nor do I think he would affront me wantonly and without any provocation on my part, for I have heard he is one of marvellous great magnanimity, and of exceeding singular fine gallantry in warlike matters. Indeed, he hath been looked upon by many as one of the completest soldiers in all Christendom: added to which, his many laudable good virtues have made him Sir Walter's particular friend."

"Were he the devil's particular friend I would care not!" exclaimed his companion. Here the conversation ended, by a messenger coming from Sir Walter for Master Francis to attend him in the state cabin. Thither then hurried he on the instant, and found none there but his patron and Colonel Harquebus, socially quaffing of their wine after dinner. The latter seemed to be a man of some fifty years or so—his hair and beard gray, or rather, grisled—his face brown, and marked with a famous scar along the right cheek and another over the forehead, his eyes were piercing and severe, and his features, though not uncomely, were so stern and haughty as almost to be repulsive. It was evident, from the great breadth of his shoulders and size of his limbs, he was of exceeding vigor; indeed, he had been one of the tallest and properest men of his time and even now appeared scarcely to have passed the very prime of his age. His dress was of extreme plainness, carelessly put on, having a dagger at his girdle, and a Spanish rapier of great length at his side. He was talking when Master Francis entered, whom he only noticed with a stare, somewhat of the rudest.

"Sit you down, Master Francis," said Sir Walter kindly to him. "There is some of the enemy's wine before you, and of very choice quality. Drink you our safe and speedy return to our own shores." Master Francis did as he was bid, the colonel all the time seeming to scrutinize his appearance with so searching and severe a look, that others beside Harry Daring might have supposed from it he was monstrous uncivil in his manners.

"The fight commenced," said Colonel Harquebus to Sir Walter in a quick sharp voice, and as if in continuation of what he had before stated—"Enemy strongly posted. Met us with a galling fire, and the action soon became sharp. Right wing engaged with a superior force. Held their ground well. Enemy's cavalry tried to turn our left, were charged by our own horse. Desperate conflict—slashing work—as excellent good fighting as ever I saw! Our horse forced to give way, were reinforced by another regiment, and then they charged the enemy with such wonderful fine vigor, they retreated behind the village in a presently. Enemy's guns annoyed our centre. Shifted ground and took up better. Splendid manœuvre, by this hand! Enemy's pikemen and muskets, five thousand strong, strove to break into us upon passing the wood. Received them steadily—desperate sharp fire!—battalions moving in line—horrible difficult ground!—got broke—reformed—wheeling up into line at last, obtained a marvellous fine position. Enemy kept gaining strength at this point. Charged again and again, and were beaten back. Monstrous hard work! but a singular, admirable piece of good fighting. Went with my regiment to take the village. Every house a fortalice—and a windmill at the entrance strongly garrisoned, that

opened on us a dreadful villanous fire—took it by assault. Forced the Spaniards out of the village at the point of the pike. Pushed on to take the guns. Were charged by the enemy's cavalry—fell back upon the village in exceeding creditable order. Enemy's foot in great force advanced to retake the village. Magnificent fighting! Wonderful fine heavy fire! Admirable famous slaughter! Received a shot in the shoulder. Dreadful hard pressed by numbers. Got separated from my regiment. Killed a few of the enemy. Had my sword knocked out of my hand—was overpowered and taken prisoner."

"I remember that battle well," observed Sir Walter, "'twas right hotly contested."

"Odds wounds! that it was, I promise you," continued the colonel, after a quaffing a goodly cup of wine: then looking with some contempt at Master Francis, who was absorbed in his own reflections, added expressively, "But we had *men* about us, Sir Walter! Proper fellows of their inches. No pale-visaged varlets in fine doublets. No popinjays. No chamberers. Men were they, Sir Walter—men of the true breed, that looked on the barrel of a musket as the best pouncet-box, and preferred the flashing of a row of pikes to the wanton glances of a bevy of idle women. There were no scribbling skip-jacks amongst them. They consorted not with a parcel of trumpery rhymesters. They were excellent brave fellows, Sir Walter—gallant hearts, every man of them."

"I doubt it not," observed Raleigh. "But what became of you after you were taken prisoner?"

"I was known," replied the colonel. "The enemy knew me well. By this sword! I had given them infinite good reason for it! I doubt much had I been a mere absolute fine gallant my name would have been so famous amongst them. I was none such, I promise you—can't abide them—fit for nothing. Well—the Spaniards were mightily rejoiced at having got hold of me. I was taken to the rear. Chirurgeon came to dress my wounds. Didn't like his treatment, for he probed my shoulder and put me to the very horriblest torture I ever endured. Wouldn't wince. Next time he did it, tweaked his villanous nose for him. Saw no more of *him*. Another chirurgical knave came—approaching me trembling like an aspen—handled me as tenderly as though he took me to be a dragon. After that, was carried with a strong escort to Spain. Horrid roads—long journey—escape impossible."

"How fared you during your captivity?" inquired Sir Walter.

"Pretty well at the first," answered the colonel, occasionally glancing at Master Francis during his speech such looks as seemed to show he liked not his appearance. "A soldier wanteth not to have his delicate flesh pampered with dainties, no more than he careth for silk and satin for his apparelling. I was content with what I could get. Ate—drank—slept, as I might. Was marched to Cadiz, more strongly guarded than ever. Had I been but noted for my skill with the pen, doubt much they would have so cared for me. People stared at me as I passed, like rustics at a conjuror. Was lodged in the castle. Wounds got well. Every one came a visiting of me. Marvelled to find so many priests of the number, all a praying away from morning till night. Not one of these knaves had any skill in warlike matters, I'll be bound for't. Asked what they came about. Found 'twas to make a papist of me. Began a kicking of them all out of my company on the instant; which, when they saw, none stopped to cover the retreat of the rest. A panic seized on the whole detachment; and they made for the door with all sorts of fearful exclamations, whilst I hung upon their rear, doing them what damage I could."

"Methinks that was but uncourteous treatment for religious men," said Raleigh, but not without seeming somewhat amused.

"Hang them for villains!" exclaimed Colonel Harquebus. "They thought of making an apostate of me. Got thrust into a dungeon after that, and fed on bread and water. Didn't care. A soldier careth for naught. All the beggarly monks, friars, and the like contemptible set in the town, were preaching a crusade against me. Wanted to have me burnt as a heretic. People furious. Officers of the garrison in a fright. Gave out I had throttled myself. Priests satisfied—mob quiet. Had I been but a paltry secretary, the Spaniards would have cared but little whether I lived or died." And here he glanced again at Master Francis.

"But sought they not to treat with you about your ransom all this time?" asked Sir Walter.

"Wanted a thousand ducats," replied the colonel. "Hadn't a maravedi. When I quitted England had left all my dispo-

sable property in the hands of a citizen of London, in great repute for his honesty and frugality. Could write little else save my name. Hate writing. A soldier can employ himself better. Got one of the garrison to pen me a letter to my honest citizen. Put on it my seal and signature. Forgot it had been writ in Spanish, of which my honest citizen had no knowledge. Sent it by a Hollander trading to London. No reply. Next got one writ in English. No reply. Next got the captain of a Dutch merchant to call on my honest citizen, requesting of him to send the money for my ransom. Honest citizen swore he had never heard of my name. Wretched villanous caitiff! hath got in plate, money, and jewels, some ten thousand marks of mine—besides my deeds and papers. Mean to cut his weasan for him on my return."

"Nay, I would do the knave no violence," observed Raleigh. "Give him to justice—the law will right you, and see he hath fit punishment."

"Let the law go hang!" exclaimed Colonel Harquebus. "What be the use of a lot of scribbling, prating, poor rogues of lawyers, but to set honest brave men by the ears? There be no law like unto the law of the sword, and no such lawyers as soldiers expert at their weapon. I will cut off his ears at least—a murrain on him! But he was one of those intolerable monstrous clerklike varlets, from whom no better behavior could be expected: fellows that live by penning, engrossing, and such like villanies. I would the world were well quit of such—'twill never be fit for brave men, till all craft of penmanship and monkish bookishness be driven out of it at the point of the sword. Detest such vocations. Can't abide scribblers. Hate books."

"How kept you your health during your imprisonment?" asked Sir Walter.

"Famously well," answered the colonel. "I cared not a jot how things went. I ate my bread—drank my water—prayed to God to confound my enemies—and went to sleep in my dungeon with a safe conscience. Had I been one of your famous fine gallants, now, who must needs dress themselves up in silk doublets, and look as melancholy as a woman without a lover, mayhap I should have been all the worse for the treatment I had whilst a prisoner, but I was of no such trumpery sort, I promise you; and the only thing that vexed me was, when I heard the firing of the great guns of the castle and the other ordnance and learned for what it was, I could not get to have any share of the fighting."

"I would you had been with us," observed Raleigh, "some of our commanders had wonderful need of your experience. There hath been famous blundering, and monstrous loss of excellent great profit to the queen in consequence."

"Alack! for me not to have been at the taking of Cadiz is a thing to grieve at all my days," replied the colonel in some dejection, and then swallowed a cup of wine, as if to wash down his disappointment.

"I see not why you should so much lament it," observed Raleigh. "You have been at so many important actions, that methinks having no part of one only should be of no moment to you."

"But it is of exceeding moment to me!" exclaimed Colonel Harquebus sharply. "To have missed seeing so much excellent fine fighting is monstrous to think of. 'Tis abominable—intolerable, villanous!"

"I must now to the captain of my ship," said Sir Walter, rising from his seat. "And to see how go on the wounded. Master Francis, remain you here till I return."

Master Francis had noted but little of the preceding conversation, for his thoughts had the most of the time been engaged upon the melancholy death of Joanna; but what he had seen and heard of his companion did not make him feel in any sort of comfort when he found himself left alone with him. There was something so stern in his look and uncourteous in his manner his heart felt chilled at it. A silence for a minute or so ensued after Sir Walter had left them. Master Francis felt too humbled to speak, and the other appeared not inclined for conversing. The colonel seemed scrutinizing more severely than ever the appearance of the young secretary, who was of too modest a disposition to find himself so rudely stared at without looking somewhat confused. He imagined that his companion might have heard from some one in the ship what gross affront the queen had put upon him before all her court, and believing there was sufficien. cause for it, was determined to use him despisingly. Colonel Harquebus drank off another cup of wine, and seemed to be in some impatience. He beat the table with his knuckles—coughed a little—made two or three slight hems as if he were about to speak, and ever and anon glanced frowningly at his companion.

Master Francis wished that Sir Walter would return. Still never a word was spoke by either. Presently the colonel rose, stalked haughtily from the table, and just as he passed the other, he put on his face the scornfulest look he had yet used, and left the cabin muttering with a most contemptuous expression the words, "paltry secretary!"

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

It is a work of charity, God knows,
The reconcilement of two mortal foes.
MIDDLETON.

Hold my heart-strings, whilst contempt
Of injur es, in scorn may bid defiance
To this base man's foul language. FORD.

Peace, damned enchantress—peace! I should look on you
With eyes made red with fury; and my hand,
That shakes with rage, should much outstrip my tongue,
And seal my vengeance. SHAKSPEARE.

"I LIKE it not, Master Bacon," observed my Lord Essex, as he flung himself into a chair in a spacious and well-appointed chamber in his own stately mansion, with a countenance that showed he was chafed at something. "I like it not, I promise you. Here the first thing I find on my return is this fellow Cecil appointed secretary of state; and on my telling of the queen how little it pleased me, seeing I had wished Sir Thomas Bodley should have the place, he being much the properer man, she rated me soundly for questioning of her appointments, and said haughtily, she would have for her servants such as she liked."

"I do not see how your interest can suffer by this," replied Master Francis Bacon, looking up from a huge volume he had in his lap. "Sir Robert Cecil doubtless knoweth what be his best policy. The man who hath his fortune to make beginneth not by setting of himself against one whose fortune is established."

"Nay, 'tis not for that I care," answered my lord disdainfully. "I heed not a rush any of these Cecils, busy as they make themselves; but I looked to have the place for my friend; and it vexeth me monstrously to find, after perilling myself so often as I have done—put myself to great charges, and borne with her humors—whilst I was fighting of her battles, the queen should put such a slight on me as to appoint this fellow to the neglecting of Sir Thomas Bodley, whose fitness and worthiness I had earnestly spoke to her upon."

"I pray you make the best of it, my lord," said Master Bacon. "Though Sir Thomas hath not been made secretary, it was not from lack of zeal in you for his advancement: therefore have you naught to complain of yourself. And now that Sir Robert hath been appointed to that office, it must be to little purpose your seeming vexed in any way; for your vexation will in no way serve your friend, or disparage his rival. All that can be said of it amounteth to this—that the appointment is a disappointment."

"And a miss-appointment, or I'm hugely mistaken," replied the other in some bitterness.

"Then shall no blame be attached to you in the appointing," added his companion.

"But it be monstrous of the queen to have used me thus!" exclaimed my Lord Essex sharply, as he left off playing with the gold buttons upon his green velvet doublet, and threw himself back in his chair, looking more discontented than ever. "It seemeth that every fool must have influence with her now, whilst they who have perilled life and limb for her are to be slighted at every turn of her pestilent humor."

"My lord," replied Master Bacon, gazing upon the other with exceeding seriousness. "It hath pleased you to take me to be your friend and counsellor—more from your infinite sweet nobleness of heart than from any merit of mine—therefore must you excuse any seeming over-boldness in me seek I the proper performing of the counsellor's part. It must be apparent on the very slightest reflection, that her majesty hath been a most bountiful mistress to you. Mayhap she hath some qualities of temper you approve not of; but where will you find any one human creature, more particularly a woman, still more a sovereign, that hath so happy a disposition naught could be taken away to better it? I know not of the queen's majesty's ill qualities of mine own knowledge, but I know of her very many princely virtues; and have seen with how singular admirable a friendliness she hath been disposed toward you on divers occasions, to the making of you the chiefest in her court. That your marvellous great worth, excellent valor, and very perfect discretion, deserved no less of her, be true enough; but it speaketh famous things of her discrimination that she should have found

out your truly noble excellences; and she deserveth the like praise in proving she knew how to appreciate them. Touching this appointment of Sir Robert Cecil, it must be known unto you, the queen's majesty must needs have a voice in the matter. She hath used it; her will is absolute, and all opposition fruitless. Perchance Sir Thomas Bodley was the properer man; and having recommended him as such, you should reconcile yourself to another being preferred in his stead, by remembering you have done your duty as a subject in stating to your sovereign who was the fittest person, and fulfilled all that your friend could have expected of you by lauding and bringing forward his qualifications. The thing is ended. Now you can neither serve your friend in the matter, nor yourself by making any stir in it; and if Sir Robert Cecil hath any ill will against you, or any of his family—I say not they have, for I should be loath to attribute bad feelings to any honorable person—they would like nothing so well as seeing you setting of yourself against the queen's pleasure, which they know well enough can only end in your discomfort, and their further profit. I pray you, pardon me, my lord, if, in my earnest zeal for your welfare, I may have seemed to put myself too forward in saying what I have; but no consideration for mine own interests would allow me to see you risking your favor with the queen, without giving you proper caution."

My Lord Essex had listened to what fell from Master Bacon rather impatiently at first—looking haughtily, pulling down the sleeves of his doublet, adjusting his cloak, and changing of his position; but toward the end of it, he seemed better satisfied, and looked with a more pleased aspect. The reasoning was too convincing to be disputed; and it was so properly put forward, that one even of so proud a nature as was my Lord of Essex, and spoiled child of Fortune as he was, could find no offence in it.

"I will endeavor to think no more of the matter," observed he, rising from his seat and proceeding to the window. "But I like not these Cecils. My lord treasurer seemeth to be ever opposing me: and I would rather any man than Sir Robert had been made secretary."

My Lord of Essex stood a few minutes silently looking out into the court-yard, and Master Bacon quietly returned to the perusing of his book.

"Ha!" exclaimed the former, in a note of pleased surprise, "here cometh Raleigh." At the first hearing of this intelligence Master Bacon closed the volume he held and placed it on the table before him, looking also in some degree gratified.

"I can say naught of his ability as a commander," observed he, "that not being of my province; but a riper scholar than Sir Walter Raleigh have I rarely met with."

"And a famous gallant commander is he," added my lord, "and I do believe a truly noble gentleman. Mayhap he hath sometimes presumed somewhat, and took on him too much of the oracle, but his showing of the valiant spirit he did at the attacking of the Spanish fleet, hath made many by whom he was hugely misliked for his presumption, to speak of him more worthily than they used."

Presently, preceded by a serving-man in a gorgeous livery, to announce him, Sir Walter Raleigh made his appearance, and the reception he met with was wonderfully cordial.

"Master Bacon, I am heartily glad in meeting with you again," said Raleigh, turning courteously to the other; "'tis an infinite pleasure to have an argument with so able an opponent—nay, not a pleasure only, but as great a profit; for although he who disputeth with one of such marvellous learning and perfect judgment must needs come off but second best, still what he heareth of the other bringeth such additions to his own knowledge, that he gaineth by his loss."

"That could not be with one who argueth after the fashion of Sir Walter Raleigh," answered Master Bacon, "even supposing it could be with any other: for in the first place, I have ever found you to have such mastery of your subject, I have felt at my wit's end to answer you with any sort of discretion; and, in the next place, what you could get from my poor ability I know not, seeing you are a perfect Crœsus in learning, and I but a mere beggar, as it were, who must needs put in his wallet what he getteth of others."

"I would there were a few more such beggars," observed Raleigh, with a smile; "poverty would then be more desirable than wealth, and they who now bestow their alms so sparingly would be forced to seek alms for the supplying of their own wants, and be taught the generous lesson they know not how to practise. But what news have you, my lord?" in-

quired Sir Walter, suddenly addressing my lord of Essex.

"Little of any moment," replied he. "The queen beginneth to grumble about the little profit she hath had of her fifty thousand pounds, and hath rated me and my lord admiral for inducing her, by our tempting speech, to embark so great a sum in the undertaking."

"Had we taken the Indian fleet, now how famously had we pleased her majesty," said Raleigh.

"But the Indian fleet having been burned of the Spaniards, it standeth to reason we could not bring them away with us," replied Essex, somewhat sharply, for he liked not the subject to be alluded to, he having been charged with remissness in allowing of their destruction.

"Methinks, under the circumstances, we did the best we could," added Sir Walter; "and the advantages we have gained are neither few nor slight. We have shown to the world how little we care for the power of Spain, for we have carried the war, as it might be said, into the braggart Philip's private chamber, and, with small loss on our sides, annihilated his fleet—prevented him from sending any supplies to Mexico for this season at least—took from him the power of injuring our commerce for some time to come, and—beside the two galleons and much other profit we deprived him of—took by assault one of the chiefest and strongest of his cities."

"I would we had kept it, as I wished," answered my lord. "Could we have got victual from Morocco, or elsewhere, in sufficiency for our force, I doubt not we would have held Cadiz till Philip had offered us Calais in exchange."

"I'faith that would have been to us the greatest advantage of the two," said Raleigh, "seeing that it be so much more commodious; and having been in our possession for so long a time, and then lost, the regaining of it would have been exceeding satisfactory to the queen and all her loving subjects. But let us be content with what we have done. Methinks it deserveth to be considered a glorious triumph."

"And so it doth, out of all doubt," replied Essex; "but some are never satisfied, do what you would. There hath application been made to my lord treasurer for the payment of the soldiers and marines, which hath caused all this dissatisfaction of the queen concerning of the expending of her fifty thousand pounds; and she declareth the men have been well paid by what they gained in the sacking of the city."

"Mayhap some of them," observed Sir Walter, "did then and there get such handsome wages as might have justified my lord treasurer—in his own eyes, doubtless—of refusing further payment. At least there lieth a consolation for us, let my Lord Burghley be as little satisfied as he may, in knowing with what extreme satisfaction the whole realm regardeth the issue of our expedition."

"Indeed, it seemeth to me so," said Master Bacon. "Every one talketh of it. Even in the courts, when I go to hear some knotty question decided, I find the young lawyers are as full of galleons and argosies as ever was any port in the king of Spain's dominions; and question I any how speedeth the plaintiff in his action, they will answer me, he took fire and blew up with a monstrous thundering report, and did terrible damage by discharging of his heavy ordnance."

The two commanders laughed heartily at this conceit, and it appeared to have put my lord of Essex in entire good humor, for he began conversing cheerfully on the matter with both of his companions.

"I would fain have your company to dinner with me, my lord," observed Sir Walter to Essex, as they stood jesting and laughing together at the window. "Durham house would gladly open its gates for your entertainment."

"And I would as gladly enter them," replied my lord, in the like courteous spirit. "I doubt not of meeting a right hospitable reception; and I know not where I would sooner go in the expectation of being honestly entertained."

"O' my life, my good lord, you do me but justice," said Raleigh, earnestly. "I lack not sufficiency of good will in the matter, believe me; and therefore shall I be the more inclined to give you good cheer, that it may induce you to honor my poor dwelling with your company as often as your convenience will allow."

"You shall not find me backward, I promise you," answered Essex. "I will taste of your cheer this day, if it please you, Sir Walter, for a beginning, and after, whenever you may be in the humor."

"I thank you, my lord—I desire no better good fortune," observed Sir Walter. "But there is a certain friend of mine I much wish you to meet at my house to-day, who hath had the ill hap to offend you, in a matter whereof he pro-

testeth his entire ignorance; and I have set my heart upon reconciling you to him."

"Then should I be loath to disappoint you," replied my lord. "If the gentleman hath done me no great offence—no wrong to mine honor—naught impossible for me to hush up—and professeth that he hath offended me in ignorance, consider your desire accomplished."

"It delighteth me infinitely to hear you say so," said Sir Walter. "And well convinced am I, Sir Robert Cecil will be as much gratified as am I, at hearing of your readiness to live with him on terms of greater friendship than you have of late."

"Nay, I will have none of him," cried the haughty noble, as soon as he ascertained he was to meet the new secretary; and turned away.

"But, my good lord"——

"He hath an exceeding meddlesome disposition, Sir Walter,—a most pestilent busy nature, and is ever thrusting of himself where he should not."

"He hath stated to me that this appointment was forced on him by the queen," observed Raleigh. "And moreover declareth, that had he known at the time you were seeking of it for your friend, he would have been eager to excuse himself, and recommend Sir Thomas Bodley's greater fitness."

"He putteth himself ever against me in whatsoever I would undertake," continued my Lord Essex, still looking gloomy and dissatisfied. "These Cecils be ever at it."

"He hath sworn to me, in as moving terms as ever I heard, he was your very true friend and servant," added Raleigh. "And vowed there was no man living for whom he would sooner do a service, was it within the compass of his ability."

"I want not his services," said my lord, haughtily. "I doubt not I could serve myself, at a pinch."

"He who serveth himself, rarely complains of a hard master," observed Master Bacon, in a manner somewhat between seriousness and jesting. "Yet, however well qualified some may be to do without assistance, there is generally a time when they shall be glad enough to have another's aid. A man prideth himself on the excellence of his legs—he could walk through the world upon them—by-and-by he shall be forced to take a stick or a crutch to help him to his neighbor. I say not, my lord, there can be a likelihood of your requiring any such propping, save as regardeth the natural decay of strength, which is common to all men; nevertheless, when, in a spirit of friendliness, any help may be offered, methinks the policy can not but be bad which, by a churlish and discourteous refusal, because it is not needed at the time, preventeth its coming to you, should you afterward sink into any extremity."

"Trouble me no more about it, Master Bacon—I like not these Cecils," answered my lord of Essex, though not so haughtily as before. "They are ever professing of themselves my true friends, yet find I them every day striving to thwart me in some way or other."

"Pardon me, my good lord, seem I too earnest in this!" exclaimed Sir Walter. "I pray you, remember, that both of you being much in her majesty's confidence, and engaged in the duties of the state, it is absolutely necessary there be no differences or dislikes betwixt you; else must the queen suffer for it to some extent—for no government can act with efficiency when the members of it are at variance with each other; because one being ever ready to oppose the other, nothing can be accomplished by either."

"A government can not stand long under such circumstances," observed Master Bacon, finding my Lord Essex made no reply to what Sir Walter Raleigh had stated. "You two stand in the state as are the arms to the body—if each pull contrary ways, there existeth a great chance you neutralize your own strength, or tear in two that which you pull at; but pull you together bravely, your united force shall move whatever you have a mind."

"That seemeth plain enough," said my Lord Essex, "and I should not like the queen's government should suffer by my dislike of any one. In honest truth, Sir Walter, I bear him no malice."

"That will I readily believe, my good lord," replied Raleigh, as if spying his advantage and anxious to follow it up. "I have seen such signs of a princely disposition in you, that I can not imagine a mere feeling of prejudice against Master Secretary, should lead you into allowing the realm to be ill governed."

"Nay, o' my life, I would not, Sir Walter!" cried my lord.

"I will answer for him in that," observed Master Bacon. "So far from his bearing malice, I have known him, out of his gracious and admirable magnanimity, give up a just resentment for the better furthering of the queen's interest."

"That was noble of him," answered Raleigh, with extreme earnestness. "Indeed, 'tis a most convincing sign of a truly great and gallant nature."

"It scarcely deserveth mention," said my Lord Essex, looking to be in a much better humor. "By this hand, I would do such any day."

"I doubt it not, my good lord," replied Sir Walter. "And if you knew with what deepness I have this reconciliation at heart, knowing how much her majesty may be benefited by it, I am certain, from all I have seen and heard of your bountiful sweet virtues, you would put aside whatever unkind feeling you entertain against Sir Robert Cecil, as something your noble nature disdaineth, and come with me to meet him at my house, without another word said."

"As you will, Sir Walter," answered my Lord Essex, very courteously, "I am ready now. If it please you, we will go this very minute."

Leaving Sir Walter Raleigh and my Lord Essex to proceed to Durham house, I must request of the courteous reader, that he follow me with Master Francis, who was leaving the lodging of his true friend Master Shakspeare, at the Bankside, and was making for his uncle's dwelling in St. Mary Axe. The truth was, the behavior of Colonel Harquebus had become so unpleasant to the young secretary, that it made his life perfectly miserable. He would have taken the advice of his true friend Harry Daring, and challenged the colonel for the indignities he was continually putting on him, but imagining that that officer knew of the queen's behavior to him, which was ever in his mind, and believing he would treat with scorn and contempt any proceeding of the kind from one of such obscure origin, Master Francis shrunk from drawing upon himself greater contumely than he received, which seemed like enough to come to pass, were he to attempt calling his insulter to account for his conduct. Another reason weighed greatly with him. Colonel Harquebus was Sir Walter Raleigh's particular friend and companion in arms; and the kindness Master Francis had received from his patron made him feel exceeding delicate about quarrelling with one for whom he ever expressed great admiration and attachment. His position becoming so peculiarly uncomfortable, because the colonel had taken up his residence with Sir Walter, and had constant opportunities for affronting him, whereof he let none escape, made him more anxious than ever to know something certain of his birth. Upon acquainting Master Shakspeare with all that had transpired since they last met, the latter had advised him to go alone to his kinsman who, it was thought by both, knew more of the matter than he chose to tell; and offer such a sum of money for his giving up the secret as would be sufficient to tempt his avaricious disposition; and upon this counsel Master Francis was now acting.

He had stepped out of a pair of oars on to the Blackfriars' side of the river, and was going on his way, lost in his own melancholy meditations, when he was roused from his revery by hearing himself accosted in a loud pedantic voice in the following words:—

"Behold me here, divine Zenocrate,
Raving, impatient, desperate, and mad,
Breaking my steeled lance, with which I burst
The rusty beams of Janus' temple doors,
Letting out Death and tyrannizing war,
To march with me under this bloody flag."

Master Francis saw before him a man with an exceeding dirty face and ragged apparel—the perfectest specimen of a vagabond he had met with a long time—having his right arm stretched out, holding, what seemed to the young secretary, to be a rolling-pin, the other arm being akimbo, but occasionally changing its position to wave a cabbage-leaf, which he did with a look of the heroic cast so ludicrous, that serious as was Master Francis's humor at the moment, he could not help smiling. It was some few minutes before he recognised in this odd compound of dirt and drollery, his old acquaintance Ralph Goshawk, the young haberdasher of the Strand; and believing, from the neglectedness of his appearance, he was in great poverty, he questioned him upon the matter. With considerable difficulty, the young secretary understood from the other's blank verse and tragedy manner, that play-going had been his ruin. His customers liked not being addressed in ends of plays, and all by degrees left him to have their wants looked after by haberdashers more attentive to their business. Want followed—from bad he fell to worse; and now lived as he could, which was as vagrant a life as ever was known—but so powerful was his passion for the seeing of plays, that got he a penny or two-pence of any one, he would be off on the instant to one of the cheapest playhouses, though he wanted food ever so. Master Francis bestowed on him a handsome sum, telling Ralph to put himself

in a better doublet, and when he wanted greater assistance, to seek for him at Durham house. The play-mad haberdasher first gazed with a famous wonder in his look, at the money, the which he presently put in a place of security; then turning out his toes, whereof the better part had already turned out of the shoes which should have covered them, and placing himself in his favorite position—in a monstrous melancholy visage, at first fixing his glance on the person he addressed, and afterward on the heavens above him, he spoke these lines very movingly:—

"Durst I presume to look upon those eyes,
Which I have tired with a world of woes,
Or did I think submission were enough,
Or sighs might make an entrance to my soul,
Yon heavens! you know how willing I would weep,
Yon heavens can tell how glad I would submit,
Yon heavens can say how firmly I would sigh!"

At the concluding of the last line, and before Master Francis had the slightest expectation of such a thing, Ralph Goshawk threw his arms around the neck of his benefactor, embracing him with an abundance of most heart-moving sighs; and then stalked away, pathetically wiping of his eyes with the cabbage-leaf.

Master Francis had scarce parted with him when he was accosted by an old woman in a dark cloak, whose sallow and wrinkled physiognomy and querulous voice he easily recognised as those belonging to Dame Margery.

"Odds pittikins, how you be changed!" exclaimed the old gossip with a look of prodigious wonder. "Marry, were not your countenance so familiar to me, I doubt hugely I should have known you. By my troth, you must needs have made your fortune!—and who deserveth it so well, I should like to know! Indeed, never saw I a more comely and gallant gentleman—and never knew I one of so bountiful a heart when he had wherewithal to give, and an old acquaintance who requireth it as badly as do I, nigh at hand, to thank him for his largess."

Master Francis would gladly have avoided the old dame, for she awakened in his mind associations of an exceeding unhappy character. He brought out his purse to bestow a liberal gift, that he might the sooner get rid of her.

"Oh, Master Francis, we have had such monstrous doings since you left us," cried Dame Margery, glancing wistfully at the well-filled purse. "Master Sarsnet be running as fast as he can to the devil as I would away from him—he is ever in his cups, and his business be going to rack and ruin, whilst he giveth himself to riotous ill-living. I served him faithfully for many a long year, but latterly he got to be so profligate in his courses, that my virtue could abide it no longer." Master Francis had got a piece of gold in his hand, at the sight of which, the old woman looked to be quite in a fidget to be fingering of it.

"By my troth, you have had a narrow escape," continued she, rubbing her thumb and forefinger together, and staring at the gold as if she could not take her eyes away. "A narrow escape, indeed. For of all shameless horrible wantons that breathe, that Joanna was the worst. Her infamy exceeded description. Master Francis! Master Francis!" bawled out Dame Margery upon finding him of a sudden move away from her as hastily as he could, without giving her the piece of gold her mouth had been watering at so long; but the slanderous old gossip bawled to no purpose. Master Francis quickly placed himself out of sight and hearing, leaving her in such a complete vexation and disappointment she had never known since her worthless existence commenced.

Upon Master Francis reaching his uncle's he knocked for admittance, and after some little delay, to his extreme surprise, knowing his uncle kept no attendant, the door was opened by a stout varlet with a monstrous searching look with him, that the young secretary remembered at a glance to be the very watch that had sought to take Master Shakspeare and himself to the compter, but noticing the gallant young gentleman who wanted entrance, Neighbor Sheepface fell back respectfully to give him way.

"They be all up stairs, an it please you, noble sir," said the man. Master Francis entered, puzzled to know who could be up stairs, and why Neighbor Sheepface was there. On coming into the office he observed Barnaby Braddle with as red a nose and as punchy a body as ever, sitting upon the very same stool whereon he had so oft sat himself when attending to his kinsman's business, with a right famous knowing aspect, laying down the law to some brother-constables; and they were so intent upon what they heard, that they noticed not the entrance of Master Francis.

"You see, my masters," observed Bar-

naby Braddle, pressing the forefinger of his right hand into the palm of the other. "This can be no other than flat burglary."

"No doubt on't, Master Constable," cried one into his ear.

"Which—so runneth the law—be an offence so heinous the malefactor can not help being hanged for't."

"The caitiff deserveth no better," added another, in as loud a voice.

"Now—mark you this, my masters—cutting a purse be one thing, and burglary be another thing; therefore cutting a purse be not burglary."

"There be no denying that, Master Constable," exclaimed a third.

"Again—forgery be one thing—and burglary be another thing: yet forgery be not burglary."

"Indeed, no—I thought as much," said the first, very gravely.

"And murder be one thing, and treason be one thing, and rebellion be one thing; and burglary be another thing. Yet, as it hath been judged by the law, burglary be neither murder, nor treason, nor rebellion."

"You have laid it down like a counsellor, Neighbor Braddle," observed the second.

"But what be burglary, Master Constable?" inquired the third, with exceeding earnestness.

"There be divers kinds of burglary, Neighbor Calfskin," answered the other, putting so profound a gravity on his foolish fat face, it was laughable to notice it. "To wit—burglary with intent to kill, and burglary with intent to rob. Now, burglary with intent to kill, is when a man is *felo-de-se;* and burglary with intent to rob, is when he becometh a malefactor."

"Never heard I a thing more scholarly stated!" cried Neighbor Calfskin.

"I would I had so studied the law," exclaimed another: and every one expressed his admiration of Master Constable's marvellous fine wisdom; and did regret he possessed not similar advantages. Master Francis left these unnoticed, and proceeded up stairs; but had not gone far when he was stopped in his progress by hearing the voice of Colonel Harquebus, very loud and sharp, and seeming to be in a great anger.

"Out with it all!" exclaimed he, "Make speed, for the constables are at hand. The money—the plate—the jewels—the title-deeds! Disgorge thy spoil to the utmost farthing, or I will have thy villanous old carcase hanged on the highest gallows that can be built."

"Good sweet colonel! be not so hasty, I pray you," cried the shrill voice of Gregory Vellum, imploringly. "You shall have whatever I possess of yours. O' my life, I meant not to deprive you of aught."

"Thou liest, for a knave," shouted the other—"a villanous scribbling knave!—a parchment rascal! Didst not tell my messenger whom I sent to thee for money for my ransom, thou hadst never heard of my name?"

"Nay, sweet colonel, he hath belied me, said he so," replied the scrivener tremulously. "Truly, your name be a most honorable name—a name in famous excellent repute—a name I have ever held in most especial reverence and affection."

"Away with thee!" cried his companion. "I will be dallied with no longer. The constables are in reserve. They shall lodge thee in the compter. 'Tis fit such a caitiff should be hanged."

"Alack, be not so severe with me, noble colonel," exclaimed the old miser in wonderful piteous accents. "It be no fault of mine that thieves broke into my dwelling, and despoiled me of the chiefest part of your property."

"Thou liest again!" shouted the colonel, seemingly more enraged than ever. "They took from thee nothing. They destroyed each other whilst squabbling upon the division of their booty. Wilt deliver up my chattels? Wilt refund? Wilt disgorge?"

"Nay, I meant not to say they took everything," replied Gregory Vellum, his voice faltering more as the other's grew the louder. "It was a mistake. Francis knew they took nothing. A good youth! an admirable sweet youth! I have been more than a father to him."

"My money! my plate! my jewels! my papers!" thundered out the colonel.

"You—you—you shall have them, noble colonel," cried the scrivener more tremulously than ever. "They shall be safely restored to you anon. But there be certain charges, good sweet colonel—amounting mayhap to a matter of two hundred crowns or so, for my infinite pains, and labor, and honest stewardship"——

"Honest!" shouted his companion sarcastically. "Didst say honest? Honest stewardship?—honest devilship! Dost not blush at using such a word? Art not ashamed of thy villany? Why thou abominable, cheating, pitiful old rogue!

Dost think I am ignorant of how thou hast misused the confidence I reposed in thee? Dost think I know not to what extent thou hast strove to dishonor the dead, and rob the living? All thy tricks are familiar to me! I have made inquiry, and discovered thee to be the horrible villain thou art. By this sword, I have a great mind to hew thee in pieces—but thou art only fit to be banged like a mangy cur. Here, Master Constable!" cried he in a louder voice, "take me this caitiff to prison."

"Say not so, good colonel, I pray you!" exclaimed the miser in marvellous moving accents. "All your property lieth secure in yonder chest." And then the old miser began wringing of his hands, and crying out in a wonderful pitiful voice, "Alack! Alack! I am ruined! I am ruined!"

At this moment entered Master Francis, who had till now hesitated whether he should come up or turn back, and he beheld Gregory Vellum sinking into a chair, trembling like an aspen, whilst Colonel Harquebus was giving directions to certain of Sir Walter's serving-men to take away a chest, the young secretary remembered was the one wherein his uncle had put such store of treasure.

"Francis! Francis!" cried the old man very movingly, as soon as he noticed the entrance of his nephew, and was making toward him—"Sweet—excellent"—— What more he would have said I know not, but his utterance was at that moment completely stopped upon finding himself swung to the other end of the chamber.

"Breathest thou another word to that fellow, I will kill thee on the spot!" exclaimed the colonel with a fierce look, as he drew his dagger out of its sheath, the sight whereof appeared to have taken the miser's breath away: then turning to Master Francis, who looked as if he marvelled exceedingly to see what he did, added somewhat contemptuously, "See'st thou not, sirrah! we are on private business? Hast forgot thy manners? We want no intruders. Prythee get thee gone!" Master Francis made a hurried apology, in the midst of which the colonel turned on his heel, muttering the words "paltry secretary!" Master Francis involuntarily put his hand to his rapier, but in the same moment remembering what obligations he owed Sir Walter Raleigh, he forbore taking notice of the affront; and with a courteous bow, yet with a dreadful aching heart, he left the room, and as quickly as possible the house.

"Ah me!" thought Master Francis, as he hastened dejectedly along the street, "this Colonel Harquebus putteth my patience to sore trials! I would he were far away from me. I fear me I can not abide these indignities much longer: but if I could get to know my parentage be honest, and I come of a creditable family, I could bear them without their moving me a jot. I will to my uncle's as soon as I may, and I doubt not, with proper temptation, now his dishonesty is found out, I shall get the secret from him." It so happened Master Francis never could get an opportunity to go to St. Mary Axe, he was kept in such constant employ by Sir Walter Raleigh on matters that would stand no delay; and in a few days he was suddenly obliged to start for Sherborne.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

To make some sire acknowledge his lost son,
Found when the weary act is almost done.
RETURN FROM PARNASSUS

How now!
Even as quickly may one catch the plague,
Methinks I feel this youth's perfections,
With an invisible and subtle stealth.
To creep in at mine eyes. SHAKSPEARE.

Where did I leave? No matter where, quoth he,
Leave me;—and then the story aptly ends.
IBID.

"HEIGHO!" exclaimed Alice, as she sat at work with her cousin in her tiring room at Sherborne.

"What aileth thee, coz?" inquired Dame Elizabeth, "it be something strange to hear *thee* sigh; yet of late 'tis a fashion thou hast taken to marvellously.

"What I?" asked the other, in a seeming monstrous surprise. "What I sigh? Nay, Bess, that must be clean impossible. I'd be hanged if I'd sigh." And the merry Alice commenced very briskly humming of a tune, as if to show how careless of heart she was.

"Nay, but I have noticed thee to be in a most sighing humor of late," continued her kinswoman, "and thou hast looked melancholy—hast ceased to be ever breaking of jests—and art monstrously given to solitary walks. Thou art the last person I should suspect of unreasonable sadness, and that thou art sad in reality I feel assured. Prythee tell me why thou art sad, Alice?"

"I tell thee I am not sad, coz," replied

the other, attempting to laugh at the idea of such a thing. "'Tis an excellent good jest indeed to say *I* be given to sadness, and melancholy and solitary walks forsooth! By my troth, an infinite fine jest! Why, there can not be so merry a cricket in the whole realm," and then she hummed her tune louder than before.

"If thou art sad, it is not kind of thee to keep the cause of it from me, dear Alice," observed her companion affectionately. "Methinks too 'tis somewhat strange thou shouldst be sad at all at such a time as this—now that I am so exceeding happy." It may here be mentioned that Sir Walter having reconciled to each other my lord of Essex and Sir Robert Cecil, and for his right gallant behavior at the taking of Cadiz, was called to court at the queen's express command, and had been restored to all his dignities and his place in the queen's favor. "I marvel thou art not as happy as am I," added Dame Elizabeth.

"I *am* happy, dear Bess," answered her cousin, but there was a slight tremulousness in her voice which seemed to deny the truth of her statement. "Very happy—wonderfully happy."

"It delighteth me to hear thee say so," said the other, "for I was beginning to fear thou wert vexing thyself at something or other. For mine own part there is nothing on this earth I care for possessing, now Walter hath again acquired the queen's countenance, which he lost by the nobleness of his behavior to me, who but little deserved it of him; and though I was the cause of such deep mishap, never gave he me one cross look or impatient word, from first to last. Truly, a more kind husband fond woman was never blessed with; and to notice his extreme satisfaction now he is again all I wished him to be, giveth me such perfect pleasure as I never felt before. Surely there can not be greater happiness than is enjoyed by Walter and I."

Here Alice sighed again, and her pretty face looked singularly thoughtful and melancholy.

"By my troth, there is another sigh!" exclaimed her cousin, "and it came so from the heart, I am half inclined to think thou art in love."

"In love!" cried her companion in some amazement, yet blushing up to her eyes the whilst she spoke. "In love, Bess? why what man-animal thinkest thou I would be in love with?"

"In truth I can not say, dear Alice," answered the other, "for thou hast so turned thy lovers into ridicule, no man dare accost thee affectionately. Yet glad at heart should I be could I meet with some proper match for thee."

"Proper fiddlestick!" exclaimed Alice quickly. "Dost think I be such a firelock I can not go off without a proper match? Well—Heaven help them that can't help themselves, say I. Matched quotha! am I a coach-horse that I am to be thought nothing of unless I have my fellow? or so odd a fish that like a sole I can not be taken save as one of a pair?"

"Nay, Alice," observed Dame Elizabeth more gravely; "this is the way thou hast ever treated the subject. If I press thee on the matter thou art sure to answer with a jest. I would thou wouldst grow more serious."

"Alack, Bess! how difficult it be to please thee," answered her cousin. "A moment since I was blamed for my gravity, and now I am rated for my mirth."

There was a silence of some minutes after this. Mayhap Dame Elizabeth liked not the other's speech, and felt too hurt to reply; or, perchance, Alice found there was no more to say on the subject: however, let the cause be what it may, both plied their needles and held their prates, and Alice again got to look marvellous thoughtful and reserved. Presently she stopped in what she was doing of.

"Dost not take Master Francis to be a most gentleman-like youth, sweet Bess?" inquired she. Immediately upon hearing of the question, her cousin fixed on her a glance of mingled wonder and curiousness; at the which Alice's eyes, albeit though she looked famously unconcerned, appeared to shrink a little.

"Indeed, he appeareth well enough," replied Dame Elizabeth, in such a tone as seemed to show she thought not much of him.

"Well enough!" cried Alice, laying down her work, and darting a look at the other of extreme astonishment. "Only well enough! I doubt much thou wilt find, search the world through, so proper looking a gallant."

"Why, what dost see in him, Alice?" asked her kinswoman carelessly.

"What do I *not* see in him?" replied her companion with increasing earnestness. "Didst ever see so noble a carriage? Dost note elsewhere limbs of such just proportion, or of such infinite gracefulness? Where canst meet with features so delicate and lovely? Doth not Sir Walter speak everlastingly of his

valiant spirit, his modest nature, his excellent fine talent in the writing of plays and the like, and his wonderful great learning in all profound matters? I tell thee, Bess, never saw I so noble a figure, or so admirable a countenance. He hath eyes that be very stars, and a mouth so small, so rosy, and of so gracious a smile, 'tis a pleasure to look at it. What do I see in him?" added Alice with more emphasis, her pretty dimpled face lighted up with a wonderful animation. "I see in him the sweetest, bravest, comeliest, gallantest, noblest, wisest, worthiest, young gentleman ever saw I in all my days!"

Dame Elizabeth smiled, but said never a word.

"Then to hear his voice," continued her cousin, who had stopped only to take breath; "there can be no such music in this world. What mellowness it hath!—what richness it hath!—what expressiveness it hath! O' my life! every other singing hath seemed to be the very absolutest paltry poor stuff ever attempted, since I heard Master Francis singing a love-ditty, sitting by himself under the elms in the park one midsummer noon. I shall never forget hiding behind the trees listening to that love-ditty. There was he lying of his length on the grass, looking as youthful and handsome as a very Cupid, resting of his head on his arm, whilst in the other hand he held an open book; and so filling the air with exquisite sweet melody that the very birds held themselves silent the better to hear his singing. Some time after this, upon pressing of him very much—for never knew I a creature of such exceeding shyness—I got him to sing me that love-ditty when we were together in the grove, and methought it sounded more exquisite sweet than the time before. All the love-ditties I had ever heard seemed such wretched paltry nonsense I would as soon have given my ears to a fool as listened to them; but what Master Francis sung, to say naught of the moving manner in which he gave it, was a love-ditty indeed. By my troth, I could listen to such the whole day long!"

Dame Elizabeth smiled again; and, as she had done before looked with a peculiar arch meaning in her beautiful countenance.

"And then to hear how wisely he discourseth," added her pretty kinswoman with greater eagerness. "He hath spoken so of some little flower, its marvellous beauty, and wonderful excellent virtues, that I would have given all I possessed to have been that little flower, that he might have spoken so eloquently of me. And he hath described to me on some fair night we have been taking of a moonlight walk, the bright stars that were shining over our heads, in language so choice and noble, and in a manner so earnest and moving, that many a time I have envied those bright stars for having such rare things said of them. But he discourseth not of flowers and stars alone in so admirable a style: there can not be a subject ever so profound, or a thing of ever so little account, that I have not known him dilate on with such bountiful store of learning it was a marvel to hear. Indeed, I do believe there is not so wise a man living."

"Wise man!" exclaimed Dame Elizabeth, archly. "Wise fiddlestick! In what is he wise? Doth he not talk admirably? So doth a parrot if he be well taught."

"Ah, Bess!" cried Alice, endeavoring to hide her confusion under an assumed carelessness. "I knew not Master Francis when I said that."

"Wise calf!" continued her companion, in the same humor. "Why there is more philosophy in a forked radish than ever you will find in your wise man."

"When I said that, I had not seen Master Francis," observed the other with increased embarrassment.

"And what be this same animal called man?" added Dame Elizabeth, mimicking her cousin's voice as well as she could. "A thing to laugh at. A joke that goes upon two legs. A walking piece of provocation for women to break a jest upon."

"So be all men but Master Francis," replied Alice, gravely.

"As for me," continued her kinswoman, "if there be any that would have me at mine own valuation, then shall they coin all the man's flesh that is above ground into rose nobles, and lack the greatest portion of what I would go for after all."

"I tell thee, Bess, I knew not Master Francis when I said these things," answered the other, looking frowningly, as if she liked not to be reminded of them.

"If the sky were to rain lovers, I'd keep under shelter," said her cousin, in the same tone and manner.

"So I would ere I had known Master Francis," replied Alice, sharply, and evidently getting to be a little out of temper with her cousin's raillery.

"Before I marry a man I'll give my virginity to an owl!" continued Dame Elizabeth.

"*Bess, I hate thee!*" cried Alice, in extreme earnestness, flashing such an angry look upon the other she seemed quite hurt at it, and then suddenly burst into tears.

"Nay, Alice—dear, sweet Alice!—I meant not to vex thee!" exclaimed her kinswoman affectionately, as she threw her arms round her neck; "I did it but to tease thee a little for having been so secret with me about this. And dost really love Master Francis?" inquired Dame Elizabeth, after she had succeeded in quieting this sudden burst of passion in her pretty cousin.

"I do believe I love him right heartily," replied Alice, hiding her blushing face on the bosom of her companion—for she was no longer afraid or ashamed to acknowledge the truth.

"And how came it first about?" asked the other.

"Nay, I know not, for a certainty," answered her cousin. "Mayhap it was when I was so besieged by suitors upon their getting knowledge of what Aunt Dorothy had left me, I had him play the lover to me, to make the others jealous; and he played the lover in jest, so well, I had a mind he should play it in earnest."

"A goodly beginning, o' my word!" exclaimed Dame Elizabeth, with a smile; "but hath he ever shown any such earnestness of affection thou didst desire to see in him?"

"From first to last—never, dear Bess," replied Alice, dejectedly; and that hath made me oft so dull at heart."

"And didst give him any sort of encouragement, Alice?" asked her companion. "Didst show him any sign of regard? Was it likely, from thy behavior, he could guess his company was not distasteful to thee?"

"I know not the encouragement I have not given him," answered the other. "I have shown him all sorts of signs—my behavior hath ever been of the kindest to him, whilst other suitors were used with extreme uncivilness. Yet all hath been to no manner of profit. He treateth me with a very gentlemanlike courtesy, certainly, but in every other thing appeareth as indifferent to me as is a beggar to the stocks. I never meet him save with a welcome smile, and he straightway accosts me with a bow. I ask affectionately how he hath fared of late, and he will reply by inquiring, with a like affectionateness after my dog. I get him to talk of love, hoping it will embolden him to discourse lovingly to me; and thereupon he entertaineth me with a famous account of Æneas and Dido, or Hero and Leander, or some other people I would as lief hear of, as of my grandmother. This perfect carelessness, and monstrous lack of affection in him, doth make me fancy he hath given his heart to another; and that, dear Bess, driveth me into an utter despair."

"'Tis marvellous thou shouldst have gone on regarding him as thou hast done, and he so indifferent," observed Dame Elizabeth.

"O' my life, 'twas that which so provoked me," replied Alice. "Had he addressed me with such fine phrases as had others, I doubt much I should have cared for him at all; but noting how insensible he was, let me do or say what I would, put me upon using greater efforts, and taking more interest in my endeavors, till he possessed all my thoughts, and I was no better off than at first."

"Thou hast played a very gambling game with thy affections, dear Alice," said her kinswoman, seriously; "thou hast lost a little, hoping to make a great gain; and kept losing till thou hast nothing more to stake. I would give thee comfort if I could: but, supposing Master Francis to be attached to some other, which looketh to be exceeding like, thou hast but a sorry prospect of it."

"Alack! say not so, sweet Bess!" cried Alice, very movingly.

"As far as mine own wishes go, I should like nothing better than to see Master Francis a lover of thine," added her cousin; "for I have marked what excellent good disposition he hath, and how rare a nature; and knowing Walter holdeth him in huge esteem, I can not think he would object to it in any way. I will acknowledge I have observed in him all the commendable qualities thou hast spoken of, and do take him to be as noble and gallant a young gentleman as any that breathes."

"Indeed is he," cried Alice, her eyes again becoming brilliant with animation, and her rosy-dimpled cheek expressing all its pleasantness, "hadst thou seen him as I have, and heard him as I have, thou wouldst say as I do—there can not be another in the world like unto Master Francis."

"Possibly he thinketh his condition to be too low to allow him to have any thoughts of thee," continued her kinswo-

man, "and that may keep him respectful and unassuming."

"I would thou wouldst give me some hope, dear Bess," said the other earnestly.

"I will give thee not only whatever hope, but whatever aid I can in the matter," answered Dame Elizabeth, with a sincere affection. "There existeth nothing I would not do to secure thy happiness. Nevertheless I must consult with Walter as to what is best to be done."

"Nay, prythee let him have no hand in it," exclaimed her cousin, looking to be in some alarm.

"And why not, Alice?" inquired the other.

"Oh! he will so jest at me," replied her companion. "I doubt not he will so laugh on the occasion, I shall scarce be able to show my face for him."

"Indeed I will not suffer it," answered her kinswoman. "Besides, I know Walter too well to think he would offer thee annoyance in such a case as this."

"Then as it pleaseth thee, dear Bess," added Alice, affectionately caressing her companion. "Do all that thou canst for me, like a good, sweet, kind coz, as thou art; for in honest truth I do believe I shall break my heart if Master Francis will have naught to say to me."

It was two or three days after what hath just been described, that Master Shakspeare — who had that day come on a visit to Sherborne — and Master Francis were walking together in an alley of tall trees in the park. They were in earnest conversation, and did keep pacing to and fro in that umbrageous alley, intent upon what they were saying, and for so long a time, it was plain they took great interest in their discourse.

"I do think it exceeding wrong of you to give yourself up to these melancholy humors," observed Master Shakspeare, seriously. "'Tis natural enough to lament the loss of any one we have greatly loved—and that you most truly loved Joanna is beyond all question. Alack! there is no small reason for regret, I must allow; for hers was a noble nature spoiled in the rearing—a rich soil that, for lack of proper culture, hath been choked up by unsightly weeds. Had her mind and heart had proper schooling, to the full development of those excellences she undoubtedly possessed, I hesitate not in saying, she would have proved as glorious an example of womanhood as ever existed: but, as divers singing-birds catch the tones of those nigh whom they are caged, yet will sometimes break forth into a sweeter minstrelsy of their own—Joanna caught up her father's wretched cunning and selfishness, till love for you woke in her some impulses of her own natural humanity. It should be a source of rejoicing to you that she at last understood the evil she had practised, and learned how to appreciate the truth and honesty she had been so ignorant of. It should be a still greater source of rejoicing to you that your behavior to her hath been ever that of a sincere and honest heart—that you stooped to no meanness, and lent yourself to no dishonor, in the seeking of her affection. Now all regret is unavailing. It would be just as wise in you to make yourself miserable because a goodly tree had been cut down, as to fret yourself into a continual melancholy for her loss. You can not make the tree to grow again, nor recal the dead to life; and instead of benefiting yourself by this sadness, it be much more like to lead to your destruction. To what sensible purpose, then, go you on in this way?"

"I can not help being sad at heart at times," replied Master Francis; "but you know I have other things besides the melancholy death of Joanna that create my unhappiness."

"Naught that I can consider of sufficient moment to vex any man that hath in him a proper philosophy," said his friend. "'Tis true enough your mind is of no common order; yet is your nature wonderfully sensitive; and I have studied too long and deeply not to know that intellect hath but little power over disposition: but you must be *disposed* to tutor yourself into more refreshing thoughts and feelings. Remember you the consolation of Joanna in her last extremity? Was it not the conviction of your perfect happiness?"

"Indeed it was," answered the other.

"And yet, knowing this, you can show so little respect for her wishes, as to live in the pleasureless way you do," said Master Shakspeare, seemingly as if he marvelled greatly.

"From what can I derive pleasure?" inquired Master Francis.

"From all things, be you so disposed," answered his companion; "and surely there lieth enough of the agreeable around your path to balance whatever can be of another sort. Have you not what you will at your command—a liberal patron—and a circle of admiring friends? You lack nothing—you are honored wherever you go; and being in the confidence of

one who is now so great a man at court as Sir Walter Raleigh, you may consider your fortune as made. Can you not find pleasure in these advantages?"

"But I lack something that these can not give," replied his young friend, somewhat dejectedly.

"Ah! now I think of it, 'tis reasonable you should," observed Master Shakspeare, with a smile of peculiar meaning the other did not see. "You have a void in your heart that requireth filling up, and the sooner it shall be done, the sooner shall you be the happier."

"What mean you, sweet Master Shakspeare?" asked Master Francis.

"Know you no pretty damsel in these parts who could teach you such pleasant lessons as might lead to the forgetting of all your troubles?"

"In honest truth I know none such."

"Hast associated with none whose company you could prefer to that of all others—whose disposition you could approve of before any—and who hath shown you such kindness of manner as showeth she holdeth you first in her regard?"

"There is Mistress Alice whose company I should ever make choice of before any living; for she hath a most sweet disposition, and hath shown me infinite kindnesses, the which I can never forget: but that she holdeth me in any particular regard is not to be imagined; for, in the first place, my outward behavior could not have induced her to it; and, in the next, she doth nothing but jest at all such things as love and the like."

"Hath she jested on such matters latterly?"

"I think not so much as she did."

"And have you noted any change in her appearance or behavior to you?"

"She seemeth never in so merry a mood as she used, and sometimes looketh to be vexed with me, though I sing to her when she asks, and discourse to her of such things as she hath a mind to know of."

"And of all women you have had acquaintance with, you would prefer the pretty Alice for a wife?" inquired Master Shakspeare.

"Nay that is clean out of the question," answered Master Francis: "there be such difference betwixt us in fortune and quality that 'tis an idea I can not entertain for a moment."

"Now answer me at once, and to the purpose. Provided all parties were willing, and she so disposed, could you regard her with such affectionateness as might give her a fair chance of leading a happy life with you?"

"I doubt not I could; for, from the first, I have liked her exceedingly, she hath evinced toward me such marvellous goodness of heart. But why speak you of this? She hath given me no warrant for drawing of any such conclusions."

"Hath she not, indeed?" asked Master Shakspeare, with much emphasis. "Hath she not taken hugely to your society?—hath she not made a jest of all men but you?—hath she not got you to sing her love-songs again and again?"

"Truly she hath," replied Master Francis; "and as for the singing of love-songs, she seemeth to like nothing so well."

"And yet you have had no warrant for imagining she doth affect you?" said his friend. "I tell you she hath loved you all along with a most sincere affectionateness, and you have caused her many an aching heart by your monstrous indifference."

"O' my life I never saw it in that light," answered the other, looking famously surprised; "and I am wonderfully grieved at hearing I have occasioned her any uneasiness. I could not help it. I saw not she took to me in any way but in friendship. But tell me truly, Master Shakspeare, hath she such regard for me as you have said?"

"What else could have made that change in her you have stated?" asked his companion. "She is not in so merry a mood, because she believeth you care not a whit for her; and she seemeth angry with you, because of your ungrateful indifference to all the infinite kindness she hath lavished upon you."

"Nay, I do assure you I am in no way ungrateful," exclaimed Master Francis, earnestly. "But think you not her friends would look upon it as exceeding great presumption and impudency in me, used I any endeavor to attach her affection?"

"I do believe they would like nothing so well," replied Master Shakspeare; "and for mine own part, I should be infinitely delighted to see you wedded to Mistress Alice, for nothing can be so like to cure you of your present troubles as a union with so sweetly-disposed a creature. And she having such excess of mirth as will correct your excess of melancholy, there can not be a doubt but that you will be as happy a pair as any that live."

"I hope I shall love her well enough," observed his young friend, looking very thoughtful; and then added, with more

seriousness—"Mayhap some will say I only sought her for her money."

"A fig's end for what any say, save her, and her friends," answered Master Shakspeare. "But let me tell you, Master Francis, that your apparent unkindness is leading to the breaking of her heart—she is pining—and 'tis very evident to me, go you on in this way any longer, you will have to answer for the death of the cheerfulest, sweetest, excellentest young creature that ever smiled upon a lover."

"Alack, do not say so!" exclaimed Master Francis, movingly, and with an exceeding anxious countenance. "I would on no account be the cause of suffering in any, much less in one who hath ever exhibited toward me so bountiful a heart. I will strive as earnestly as I may to love her."

"Then lose you no time about it," said his friend; "for I see her coming out of the garden gate, and entering the avenue." Master Francis looked up, and sure enough Mistress Alice was coming toward him. Her step seemed not so buoyant as it was wont, and her look had lost all that laughing gayety for which she had used to be distinguished.

"Yes I will speak to her on the instant," said he, turning to where the other had stood when he last spoke: but Master Shakspeare had darted in amongst the trees upon the first sight of the fair intruder, and Master Francis found himself alone. He advanced toward the lovely Alice in a wonderful disturbed state of mind, half doubting Master Shakspeare had sufficient warrant for what he had stated concerning of that damsel's love for him; and yet with a remembrance of numberless acts of something more than kindness he had received from her, that made such a thing have the look of probability. He had intended saying of something without delay; but when they met he found himself, he knew not why, at such a loss for words as he had never experienced before; and his heart began to throb more quickly than he had known it in her company since he had been acquainted with her. He was just able to reply to her salutation, and then walked by her side under the shadow of the leafy elms, striving in his mind to form some speech as would be sufficiently apt, and to the purpose; but the more he strove, the less seemed he to succeed; for sometimes the words appeared not to express as much as they ought, and so were rejected; or, at other times, they looked too like presumption in him, and lack of proper respect, and he could not bring himself to give them utterance.

As for Alice she knew not at first what to make of his disturbed countenance and silent manner, and did hazard a jest or two on the subject in her usual humor; but it so happened she succeeded not at all in her attempts. She spoke falteringly—her laugh had no heartiness in it, and she soon found herself embarrassed in her speech, and so moved by a sort of anxiousness and fear, she presently became as reserved as Master Francis. Yet it was out of all doubt she did like this silence of her companion better than all the eloquent discourse he had used to entertain her with. Upon taking a glance at his handsome features, their eyes met, and it was no easy matter to say which, on the instant, looked the most confused of the two. After that Alice seemed to be in a monstrous uneasiness, and having a rose in her hand, began plucking of it to pieces, leaf by leaf.

"Nay, spoil not so goodly a flower, I pray you!" exclaimed Master Francis involuntarily, upon seeing the destruction of the chiefest of his floral favorites.

"Indeed, I did forget your extreme fondness for roses," said Alice in a voice scarce to be heard. "I shall not forgive myself doing so wrong a thing—but in truth I knew not I was at such ill employment."

"If it would not be thought somewhat over bold of me, sweet Alice, I would ask that flower of you," observed her companion, yet in a tone that evinced considerable embarrassment. Alice, with a sensation of pleasure she had never before experienced, noticed that till that moment Master Francis had always called her "Mistress Alice," and he, as if he had styled her "Sweet Alice," without knowing it, presently looked more confused than ever, thinking he had taken too great a liberty. Now Alice Throckmorton, the liveliest and wittiest of the maids of honor at the court of Elizabeth, who had never been at a loss for a reply, let whatever might be said to her, amongst crowds of nobles and gallants, and boldly jested at everything in the shape of love and lovers, lost all confidence in herself, and became as timid as a child. Spying of a seat in a turning of the walk, she very gladly made for it, and sat herself down, finding it difficult for her to proceed further, in the present strange excitement of her feelings.

"I have spoiled you this rose," said

she as well as she could speak, "'tis not worthy your accepting. Let me gather you another as I return through the garden."

"I doubt not I should prize that above any," replied her companion earnestly. Alice stretched forth her arm to give it to him, and thereupon Master Francis—not without some slight embarrassment—took the flower with one hand, and her hand with the other. Immediately she felt her hand pressed by his, the once confident and careless Alice began a trembling as if she were seized with a sudden fear; and though the action had been done hundreds of times by others, and she looked upon it as a thing of no note, no sooner had Master Francis raised her hand to his lips, than she blushed as if she thought there was something wrong in the doing of such a thing.

"Alice! Sweet Alice!" exclaimed Master Francis tremulously, as he still held her trembling hand in his own. "I do remember me some time ago you did ask of me to play the lover to you in jest." His fair companion answered not; but sat with downcast eyes, flushed cheek, and heaving bosom—such a picture of maidenly love, diffidence, and anxiety, as none could have expected to have met in the once witty and fearless Alice.

"I pray you now, if it please you, let me try how I can play such a part in earnest," added he with increased fervor. At this Alice did tremble more than ever, and did seem in a greater confusion; but she answered him never a word. In truth, she felt so full at heart that she could not have spoke had it been to save her life. Presently she lifted up her brilliant eyes, and they flashed upon Master Francis a look of such exquisite sweet affection as all the language that was ever writ or spoke could never express. *Master Francis did play the lover in earnest*, and so marvellously to the satisfaction of his fair mistress, that she appeared well inclined to have stayed where she was the livelong day, to behold the playing of it. At last, after the passing of better than an hour in this way, it was put a stop to by the hearing of footsteps close at hand. Alice sprung from her seat, and turned the corner toward the house, bidding her lover follow; and this Master Francis was about to do when he was stopped in his progress by the sudden appearance of Colonel Harquebus close upon him, coming from that direction. He would rather have met any one—in fact, he would have given anything in the world the colonel had been fifty miles away, for he could not help looking exceeding confused at seeing him so unexpectedly.

"Humph!" exclaimed Colonel Harquebus in his usual sharp voice, and looking more scornful than ever. "Pretty conduct this! Honorable behavior truly! Get into the confidence of a family—Scribble your way into their good graces—They treat you well—Reward you handsomely for your labors—such as they be. In return, you steal into the affections of a young gentlewoman of the family, knowing she hath a fortune."

"Colonel Harquebus!" said Master Francis, greatly annoyed by the insinuation conveyed by the other, "methinks it would be as well were you to confine your interference in matters wherein you have a right to meddle; and not impute ill motives to one of whose character and conduct you must be ignorant."

"Why, you impudent young jackanapes!" cried the colonel contemptuously, "dost think to come the secretary over me in this fashion? Is it not palpable? Am I blind? Dost suppose you can manage your manœuvres so secretly an old soldier such as am I can not detect them? I tell you 'tis exceeding paltry of you—But what better could be expected from a varlet who gaineth his living by scribbling and the like worthless employments?"

"Colonel Harquebus!" replied Master Francis, getting to be somewhat angered, "I know not why it is, seeing I have given you no offence in my life, you should be ever putting of some affront upon me: but I can endure it from you no longer. I would have you remember I wear a sword."

"Indeed!" answered the other, with a very evident scorn. "I have had my doubts of that. Wear a sword do you? I did suppose you had only a scabbard, for I have found you marvellous chary of showing the blade."

Master Francis put his hand to his rapier on the instant.

"No," exclaimed he, making a struggle to put down his anger, "you are the friend of Sir Walter Raleigh."

"A good excuse o' my life!" cried the colonel, with a look of derision, "a famous good excuse. But cowards are never at a loss for excuses, and your wretched scribblers and paltry secretaries be ever the errantest cowards that live. Know you not I am the best swordsman in Europe?"

"I neither know nor care," replied his companion, yet still striving to put down his indignation at the continual provocation he was receiving. "Coward I am not nor ever was, as Sir Walter Raleigh, under whose eye I have fought, can sufficiently assure you. Neither am I a braggart—so aught of what I have done you will not know from me. I seek not to quarrel with you. I will add, let you impute it to what motive you please, I would rather avoid it; but not from any fear of your skill in the weapon. That you are a brave soldier, I have heard; but 'tis a pity your long experience in matters of war hath made you forget there was also a necessity of your being also as brave a gentleman."

"Say you so, my fine secretary fellow?" said the other in the same insulting tone and manner he had used from the first. "Fine talking, o' my life! Brave words! An excellent good speech! Out of what book didst steal such holyday phrases? Alack, it be a pitiful thing methinks that your fine talkers should ever be such poor fighters. So, forsooth, your worship doth not take me to be a gentleman! How infinitely vexed am I! I will on the instant get me a fine doublet. I will study the courtliest phrases out of book. I will stifle my valor and take to scribbling. Why, how now, varlet! What dost mean by such impudency! What know *you* of gentlemen—a paltry poor fellow, of no note or quality, that can not say who was his own father?"

Master Francis had been much moved before—but now he became exceeding agitated. He breathed hard—he pressed his teeth upon his lower lip so firmly that the blood oozed from it, and his cheek, which had hitherto been famously flushed, now grew wonderfully pale.

"Colonel Harquebus!" exclaimed he, looking proudly and angrily at his insulter, "I have borne more from you than ever I endured from any man in my life. As the friend of one for whom I feel the affection of a son, you have had in my eyes a claim to my forbearance, which I should be loath to set aside. But forbearance hath its limits. Urge me not any more, for were you fifty times the skilful swordsman you are, give me such another affront, I will die but I will avenge it on you with my sword. Colonel Harquebus, I would pass you." Thereupon Master Francis bowed haughtily to his companion, and seemed intent upon taking himself away.

"Never saw I such thorough cowardice," replied the colonel, scornfully; at hearing which the young secretary stopped of a sudden, and looked on the other with knitted brows and a fearless gaze. "It be palpable. No sun at noonday ever was seen so clearly. Go to! you are contemptible! You are paltry! You are vile! I have suspected your worthless origin with sufficient cause. Such base behavior proveth you to be the base offspring of some wanton woman." In an instant the rapier of Master Francis flashed from its sheath.

"Thou liest!" shouted he, trembling with irrepressible rage, his eyes glancing with a brilliancy they had never till then exhibited, and his countenance, though pale as death, expressing extreme anger and defiance. "Thou liest, for a foul-mouthed calumniating villain. Draw, if thou hast the spirit of a man, and I will prove that thou art a slanderer on thy villanous body."

"Not so fast, Master Secretary," coolly replied the colonel, as he slowly drew forth his weapon. "All in good time. I like not to be hurried, I promise you. Right glad am I, however, to see that you wear something beside a scabbard. 'Tis a pretty blade. I hope you are tolerably skilled in the use of it, for I like not killing one who is ignorant of his defence. Put forth your cunning. Live as many minutes as you may. But I would fain persuade you to the saving of your life. You know what a master of fence I am. Be wise in time. Sheathe your weapon and go your ways."

Master Francis only replied by throwing his hat on one side, and making a demonstration of readiness to attack his opponent. Colonel Harquebus very unconcernedly put his hat at the foot of a tree close by; but he looked not so scornful as he had done; indeed, he seemed to be setting upon a conflict of life and death, as though it were a marvellous pleasant pastime to him.

"Then you accept not of my clemency, Master Secretary?" said he, advancing toward him. "Life is sweet. Death endeth all scribbling. I pray you have pity on yourself, and sheathe your weapon."

"Heed not me!" replied Master Francis, in no way lessening his rage. "I am loath to draw in a quarrel; but I sheathe not my weapon till I have had satisfaction for an injury."

"Then look to yourself, Master Secretary," added Colonel Harquebus, as he made a flourish of his rapier, "I must

needs kill you. Yet I like not making a hole in so fine a doublet."

The sarcasm contained in the last sentence seemed to have increased the anger of Master Francis; for he instantly crossed the other's weapon with his own, and began a brisk assault. The colonel took it at first very coolly, scarcely exerting of himself at all, as if he believed he had so poor a swordsman to deal with there was no necessity for his putting forth any particular skill for the vanquishing of him; but this contemptuous behavior the more stirred up the indignation of the young secretary. Still, however greatly angered he was, he bore in mind his adversary's reputation with his weapon, and used such caution as would give him as little advantage as was possible. Presently, the colonel found himself so pressed, he was by little and little forced into the use of all the cunning he possessed. Now their weapons flashed against each other with such marvellous rapidity the eye could not follow their movements. The colonel looked not so cool as he did. In a minute or two the colonel found himself obliged to give ground. I know not whether it was Colonel Harquebus was not such a master of fence as he had said, or that increased excitement led Master Francis to the using of a greater vigor; but the colonel was now so hotly assaulted he had to employ all his vigilance, all his strength, and all his skilfulness in his own defence; and having his attention fully employed by his adversary, could not notice where he was retreating to, till his foot came against the root of a tree that projected somewhat above the earth, and in a moment he measured his length on the ground.

"Hold thy hand, boy!" shouted he, upon seeing the point of the other's weapon coming direct upon his breast. "*Wouldst kill thine own father?*"

Master Francis dropped his rapier on the instant, and stood with clasped hands, and looks of wonder, fear, and horror, gazing upon his prostrate antagonist. As for the colonel, all trace of any ill feeling had vanished from his features, and he looked now with a sort of half-ashamed and half-pleased face.

"Well, colonel—art satisfied?" inquired Sir Walter Raleigh, coming up with Master Shakspeare unseen by the combatants, followed by Dame Elizabeth and Alice, and Harry Daring and young Raleigh, all excepting the first looking as if they marvelled exceedingly.

"Satisfied, quotha!" replied the other, as he sprang upon his feet, and began wiping of his hot face. "O' my life, I had nigh been satisfied after such a fashion as would have left me naught to desire in this world! A valiant young villain!—a very Hector! As pretty a fellow at his weapon as ever I met. You have seen something of my skill at the sword, Sir Walter: I have overcome the best masters of fence in Christendom. But, my by troth! though I sought with all my cunning to disarm him, that I might then say who I was, and acknowledge him as a son of mine, the varlet not only would not allow of such a thing, but pressed on me with such a furious valor, I had great ado to keep me a whole skin."

"You will take my word next time," said Raleigh with a smile; then turning to Master Francis, who was gazing on one and on the other, so bewildered it was evident he scarce knew what to say or do, he added—"Master Francis! or, as you must henceforth be called, Master Francis Harquebus, it is now my business to tell you, and I would gladly have told you before had I been allowed, that, from the likeness you bear to your most virtuous and excellent mother, the colonel, on the first sight of you, did suspect your relationship to him, and did question me very closely upon your history, the which I told to the full extent of what I knew. Thereupon he acknowledged himself your father, stating that he had secretly married your mother, and soon after left England for foreign wars, to escape being forced into a marriage he liked not, as I told you before; but, finding you were my secretary, and hearing you were much given to studiousness and writing, which he hath a most unreasonable contempt of, he would on no account have you made aware of your kindred to him. It was in vain I related such instances of your courage as had come under mine own eyes: his dislike of scribblers and mere gallants would not allow him to think otherwise than that I was partial in my commendations of you, and stated his resolve to make trial of your valor, that if you proved yourself of such gallant spirit as would make him glad to own you as a son, his son you should be immediately acknowledged; but if, as he imagined, you had no such spirit in you, nothing should be said about the matter; for he said he would never be brought to own relationship to a pitiful fine milksop. Upon this he tried to affront you, expect-

ing you to call him to account for it. Your forbearance he took for f ar, and vowed he would have none of you for a son. I said what I could to create in him a different opinion; and he continued to put upon you such insults as he thought most offensive and intolerable. I do believe you endured till nature could endure no longer; and now you have convinced him that learning, and taste in apparelling of oneself, can do no hurt to true valor."

"O' my life! I do begin to believe they be not so bad as I have thought," observed the colonel good-humoredly, as he sheathed his rapier.

"One thing more," continued Sir Walter. "You must not suppose, from the harshness of his behavior to you, that your father is of the crabbed nature he hath seemed. I have known him long, and have seen him oft; and do in all sincerity assert there liveth not a kinder, heartier, and more sweetly-disposed gentleman in this world—as far as I know of it."

"O' my life!" exclaimed the colonel. "I do believe he hath taken such offence at my behavior, and knowing once I would have none of him for a son, he will turn the tables, and now have none of me for a father."

Master Francis had no such idea in him. He was lost in a sort of pleasing wonder; and his feelings were overpowered at remembering that the parent he had been so anxious to meet, the ignorance of whom had occasioned him such extreme unhappiness, he was a moment since on the point of running through the body.

"Wilt shake hands and be friends, Son Francis?" inquired his father. "Wilt have peace after all this famous fighting? Dost care for owning an old soldier for thy father, thou valiant young villain? Heed not what I have said; care not for what I have done. Thou art of my blood I could swear by the way thou holdst thy weapon. I am proud of thee. I will be hanged if ever I affront thee again, thou desperate little Hercules! Thou hast thy mother's look and thy father's spirit: so if thou wilt, become a son to me in my old age, and I will love thee as well as I loved thy mother."

Master Francis, with a heart too full for utterance did hasten to his father, who, after shaking of him cordially by the hand, presently pressed him in his arms with such show of affection as was delightful for the others to look upon.

"By Gog and Magog, this be the happiest day of my!" exclaimed Harry Daring, whose honest face beamed with joy at his friend's good fortune; and every one of that party seemed to be as greatly rejoiced.

"And now, Master Francis Harquebus," said Sir Walter Raleigh; "I must needs dismiss you from my service: the colonel will not allow you to remain my secretary. But I part with you with the less regret, as I here place you in a situation of equal confidence, with one whose service I doubt not you will find far more pleasant than mine." Thereupon he took the hand of Alice and placed it in that of her lover.

"And hark you, Master Francis!" cried Master Shakspeare, looking to be in his merriest humor. "If from this time forward I catch you wearing of a melancholy visage, I will do my best to have you smothered in sad-colored taffeta, or sent to become an undertaker's apprentice."

"And look you, Mistress Alice!" exclaimed Raleigh with the like good nature. "If from this time forward I catch you breaking your wicked jests upon man-animals of any sort, I will do my best to have you shut up in a mouse-trap, or put in a cage like a tame raven, and hung where you shall not have sight of a man for the rest of your days."

All laughed at these sallies; and Alice turned away blushing very prettily, still holding her lover by the hand, and they two turned their steps toward the house. Master Shakspeare and Dame Elizabeth followed; then came Sir Walter Raleigh and his companion in arms Colonel Harquebus; and lastly, Harry Daring and the child: and it was no easy matter to say of these which wore the happiest countenance, or who had the gladdest heart.

All the goodly chambers in Durham house were filled with company. Crowds of fine gallants and beautiful dames were moving to and fro. There had been feasting in such prodigality that it was the marvel of all. There had been such delicate sweet music as seemed never to have been heard till then. Dancing had there been of such a sort the oldest there remembered not anything so commendably done; and pageants of such wonderful excellent conceits had been performed which eclipsed all things of the like kind that had ever been seen before. So brilliant a company it was thought by all, at no time had met together upon one occasion; for here were all the chiefest

nobles of the land; here were all the most famous commanders of the age: here were all the loveliest ladies of the court; here were all the greatest wits of the time; and such splendor of apparelling, such bountiful show and infinite variety of all manner of rarest fabrics and costliest jewels were there to be seen, that a stranger gazing thereon might have said there would be no occasion for any one going to distant parts in search of an El Dorado, here it was at his hand. But more magnificent than all, on a rich throne placed upon a raised dais, in the fairest chamber of the mansion, sat Queen Elizabeth, looking to be in such sweet content as was the admiration of her loving subjects.

And for what occasion had this noble company been brought together?—To do honor to the marriage of Master Francis Harquebus to Mistress Alice Throckmorton. The nobles had come out of respect to Sir Walter Raleigh, who, since his return from the expedition to Cadiz, had grown to be wonderfully popular amongst them, and was now in greater favor with the queen than ever he was. And who so proud as he—who, having just danced with her majesty a coranto, to her infinite delight, stood close at her side, arrayed with that exquisite taste and costliness she so much admired, ever and anon breathing into her ear such courtly phrases as he knew she most affected; and she answering him with smiles and pretty words, and tapping him playfully with her fan, and doing a hundred things that proved on what excellent terms he was with her.

The commanders came out of respect to their gallant associate, Colonel Harquebus, who was in great reputation with them for his approved good soldiership: and who so proud as he, as he received the congratulations of the Howards and the Veres—the Monsons—the Carews—the Cliffords—and scores of the like brave spirits, who thronged around him. The fair dames and lovely young gentlewomen had come out of respect to Dame Elizabeth and her pretty cousin, who had received such gracious behavior from her majesty as no ladies of her court had ever been known to be honored with before. And who so proud as Dame Elizabeth, seeing her husband, after being disgraced for her sake, now in such estimation with her sovereign and all England, as he had never reached till now. Alice was proud of her husband also, but she was more happy than proud.

The wits had come out of respect for Master Francis, by whom he was considered one of themselves; and famous compliments he received, and heartily was his good fortune hailed by them. And who so proud as he, at sight of so gallant a company, all met to do him honor; but I doubt not, when his eye glanced toward the dimpled rosy cheek of his exquisite sweet bride, he was also more happy than proud. The courtiers came because the queen was there, and they now rivalled each other in showing of their devotion to the reigning favorite, and marvelled any one should ever have thought ill of so princely a gentleman. My Lord Essex was not of the party, he had excused himself on the score of illness; but some did say he was only indisposed to come. The new secretary of state was there, with others of the queen's chief officers, and all were wonderful courteous to the captain of the queen's guard. None seemed more friendly than did Sir Robert Cecil; but an observer, had he paid strict attention to him as he was in earnest conversation with his coadjutor and parasite, Lord Henry Howard, in a corner of the chamber of state, where were her majesty and Sir Walter Raleigh, might have noticed in the sneer upon his lip, as he eyed the two, that Master Secretary was devising of some crafty scheme to mar the good feeling that existed between them.

Master Francis was in one of the rooms in the midst of a circle of cheerful friends, amongst whom were Master Bacon, Ben Jonson, and divers of his old acquaintances of the Mermaid, diffusing around him such pleasant wit and courteous good humor, it was delightful to look upon the scene, when he was accosted by Sir Nicholas Throckmorton, stating that the queen was desirous of seeing him on the instant; thereupon he hurried away in company with the old knight, who amused himself as they passed along, by informing his young friend that her majesty was in a very monstrous passion, and having got hold of the sword of her captain of the guard, was about performing of some bloody tragedy upon one Master Francis Harquebus and his father—they having been proved to be exceeding traitorous and disloyal subjects. Master Francis could easily perceive, from his merry countenance, that the old knight was jesting; but still he could not help entering upon some speculation on the cause of the queen's sending for him. As he proceeded through the splendid crowd

that thronged the rooms, the eyes of all turned in admiration upon his right handsome countenance and gallant figure. He was clothed in a peach-colored velvet doublet, ornamented with pearls; and trunk hose of delicate white satin, with white rosettes in his shoes. Many a fair damsel of rank envied Alice her good fortune. In truth, though Sir Walter Raleigh might have been the nobler-looking, Master Francis was the very handsomest man in the whole company; and as he moved along, he won the gracious opinion of all, by his courteous behavior and modest deportment.

Upon entering the royal chamber and passing through a circle of nobles, gallants, and lovely dames, who gladly made way for him, he heard a buz of admiration, and noticed his father rising from a kneeling position, with the queen holding of a sword in her hand, by his side, having Sir Walter Raleigh and all the chiefest of her court about her. "Master Francis!" exclaimed her majesty, evidently scanning the perfections of his graceful person with a famous admiration, "we do remember putting on you some affront, the which you deserved not; and we are now anxious to make you some slight amends for it, which we do with the greater pleasure, having heard wonderful commendation of you from our captain of the guard. We command you to kneel." Master Francis knelt on one knee at the queen's feet, in a strange tumult of proud and happy feelings. He felt something touch his shoulder, and her majesty say, "Rise up, Sir Francis Harquebus!" and then followed some courteous speech from the queen, and congratulations from the splendid circle around him; though of what was said he had but an indistinct knowledge; he felt in so great a surprise and wonder, and admiration.

A short time after this, as he was turning from the proud and happy Alice, and the equally delighted Dame Elizabeth, with a pleasure equal to their own, and proceeding out at the door, lost in the sweet bewilderment of his own thoughts, he was roused from his ambitious revery by a well-known voice.

"Remember you not, when we two were at Master Tickletoby's, and we talked of what we should do when we grew to be men, how I said that you should be a famous gallant knight, and I your esquire?"

"I remember it well, Harry!" replied Sir Francis, cheerfully, as he gazed upon the honest happy face of his true friend.

"I *knew* you would be a knight," added Harry Daring, with great earnestness; "I always said you were a gentleman born. How glad of heart I am I forswore barbering to follow you to the wars."

"Indeed, Harry, I am infinitely glad also," answered the other. "I can not forget what extreme goodness and marvellous noble behavior you showed toward me when I had no other friend than you."

"By Gog and Magog, I could not help it!" exclaimed his companion, "I loved you; that is the honest truth; and you were always of so excellent sweet a disposition, it was clean impossible I could do aught else."

"Desire you to go to the wars again, Harry?" inquired Sir Francis.

"What, against those villanous caitiffs, the Spaniards?" asked Harry Daring, quickly. "Ah, that should I, Master—Sir Francis, I mean."

"And what say you to the having, some short time hence, a goodly ship of your own?" added his friend.

"O' my life, I should like nothing so well!" replied the other, with increasing animation. "Then would I go cruising in the Spanish Main after those same rich galleons and argosies, and I doubt not I would make prize of some."

"That you shall do, Harry," answered Sir Francis.

The conversation was here broken in upon by the coming up of divers persons of worship, to congratulate Sir Francis upon the distinction just conferred upon him.

But of all this noble company there was not one so greatly noticed as was Master Shakspeare. This was owing, in some part, to his own excellent reputation, and partly to the respect and friendliness shown toward him by Sir Walter Raleigh and his young friend, Sir Francis Harquebus. The queen having spied him among the throng, had been exceeding gracious in her behavior to him, keeping him for a considerable time engaged in agreeable converse; and then, after much courteous speech, she removed a ring from her finger and gave him to wear in token of her admiration of his genius and character. This being whispered from one to another, and much talk ensuing concerning of the many wonderful fine plays and poems he had writ, wherever he went he was regarded with

a singular curiousness and respect; and the chiefest of the nobles thronged up to him as though they were proud to be considered among the number of his friends.

"All is settled, sweet Master Shakspeare," whispered the young Lord Southampton to his friend, as they stood together toward the close of the evening in a corner of the room. "I have prevailed on her at last to risk a marriage with me."

"I wish you joy, my good lord," said the other with a very earnest sincerity. "I do believe Mistress Varnon to be in every way worthy of you, and I hope you will be as happy as both your hearts desire."

"I thank you, with all my hearts," replied his patron with a look of exceeding affection. "And there liveth none to whom I feel myself so deeply indebted. Indeed, I know not what I should have done had you not stepped in so opportunely to my rescue, and with your excellent rare wit set at naught the tyrannical devices of those who would put asunder two young hearts that love had joined. Surely no man ever had such true friend as I have found in you."

"Nay, my good lord, you overvalue my poor service," observed Master Shakspeare in a kindred spirit.

"That can never be," exclaimed my Lord Southampton. "But I can not trust myself to say more on that head now. I will wait a better time."

"I'faith I am right glad to find I could turn the singing of madrigals to such good account," said his friend merrily. "Yet, I must say, 'twas not without infinite painstaking, I acquired the dignified approbation of Aunt Deborah; nevertheless, I have been so well repaid by the amusement I have had in noticing of her antiquated humor, I would cheerfully go through the same trouble to procure me the like sport."

"Alack, what a very absolute rage she will be in when she discovereth her niece hath given her the slip!" said the young noble. "But I do shrewdly suspect her greatest grief will be for the loss of her gallant. I have heard it said that she doth continually sigh for Master Dulcimer in a manner so profound, that it is quite pitiful to hear her; and when she doth fancy herself unseen of any, she will pace up and down her chamber, putting her embroidered handkerchief to her eyes, and turning up her eyes to the ceiling, and clasping of her hands together, and ever and anon singing snatches of madrigals in the most delicate moving manner ever known."

"O' my life, 'tis wonderfully pathetic!" cried the other, laughing heartily, "but as I have no taste for antiquarian matters, methinks 'twould be as well were I to turn her over to Master Cotton, who, I doubt not, will make much of her, as he holds nothing in such estimation as ancient pictures and the like, and I will warrant her as old a piece of painting—judging from her complexion—as he shall find anywhere out of a frame."

"Ha, sweet Will!" exclaimed Master Burbage coming up with Ben Jonson, as the other two were indulging themselves with their mirth. "Of what jest hast thou just been delivered? for I see there hath another been born of thy most multitudinous family."

"Mayhap, it shall be nothing better than a new version of the old story," observed Ben Jonson. "Mons parturiens, nascitur mus."

"Nay, good Ben, I will not have it that way," said my Lord Southampton. "A mountain he may be—Olympus itself was scarce such another, but what is born of him hath nothing of the insignificance of a mouse."

"I would say here as many a tender housewife hath said before—let the mouse go," answered Master Shakspeare goodhumoredly. "Perchance my jests are but mice. Yet are they such as have too much wit in them to go into a trap. As for any disparaging words that may be spoken of this facetious varlet, mind them not, my good lord. Ben is like unto one of the heathen gods—he hath grown famous for devouring his own offspring."

"Go to!" exclaimed Ben Jonson, joining in the laugh of the others. "*Thou* hast done nothing of the sort I will be bound for't, with regard to thy words, for thou knowest well enough what poor eating they would make."

"'Tis hard to say what hunger would do," remarked Master Burbage in the same merry humor. "Bears suck their own paws for lack of better victual; and if Will was reduced to a like strait, mayhap he should be found driven to his 'wit's end' for a meal."

"Good, by my troth," cried Master Shakspeare.

"He would not be the first that had come to the extremity of living by his wits," said my Lord Southampton.

"I wish him no such bad fortune," remarked Ben Jonson. "Doubtless famine

is a great evil; but to get starved to death so rapidly as he must needs be, having come to so sorry a shift, is pitiable to think of."

"Save thy sympathy for thyself, Ben," replied his opponent. "Wert thou in such want, I have a huge suspicion thou wouldst discover that there could be no jesting with an empty stomach; for it is allowed I *have* wits to live upon, albeit there be no great provision—but that thou canst find diet of however poor a kind in a like circumstance, I have no such assurance."

"You are merry, my masters!" exclaimed my Lord Howard of Walden, who, with two or three noblemen of his acquaintance, now came up, attracted by the evident mirth of Master Shakspeare and his companions. "I warrant me you have said some choice conceit or another. I pray you tell us what was the jest."

"Indeed, it was scarce worth repeating," observed Master Shakspeare, now with a monstrous grave countenance. "We were but admiring the infinite conscientiousness of a certain prudent gentlewoman, who, having in a fit of anger, called her husband 'a brute'—the which at that time she knew he was not, did as speedily as might be, verify the accusation because she would on no account acknowledge to the telling of an untruth."

Upon this the laugh became louder than ever, and my Lord Howard did join in it as heartily as any, with a perfect innocency of the jest having been directed at him, although it was well known of the others to what it alluded.

"If we may judge of the firing of the report there must needs be a sharp engagement here," said Colonel Sir Francis Harquebus, joining the circle with several of his friends, who had also been drawn there by the seeming good humor of the group. "I trust there may not be many wounded on your side?"

"Nay, good colonel, stay you with us but a brief space you will find there be no need of any *serious* apprehension," replied Master Shakspeare in the same pleasant mood, whereupon the mirth broke out afresh. "Our ordnance doeth the clean contrary of that you have been used to. Perchance we shall keep up a constant fire when we enter the field, yet instead of lessening the forces engaged, we shall be continually adding to our numbers." And so it proved—for the frequent loud laughing of these few, every moment brought to them others of the company—many of whom were the most distinguished in the land—and as Master Shakspeare had ever ready some excellent fine conceit or another which did infinitely tickle the fancies of such as were within hearing, the mirth became louder, and the throng about him increased so prodigiously he could scarce move for the crowd.

"It is Master Shakspeare!" said one; and as soon as it got whispered about that he was uttering his notable witty sayings, the singers, and the musicians, and even the masquers and dancers were left unheeded; and these, beginning to know the cause they were so abandoned, with as absolute a curiosity as any, thronged as quickly as they might, toward the same scene of attraction. It happened when the crowd was at its thickest, a message came from the queen's majesty, who had noted the flocking of the company to one place and had been told the cause of it, for Master Shakspeare to appear before her forthwith.

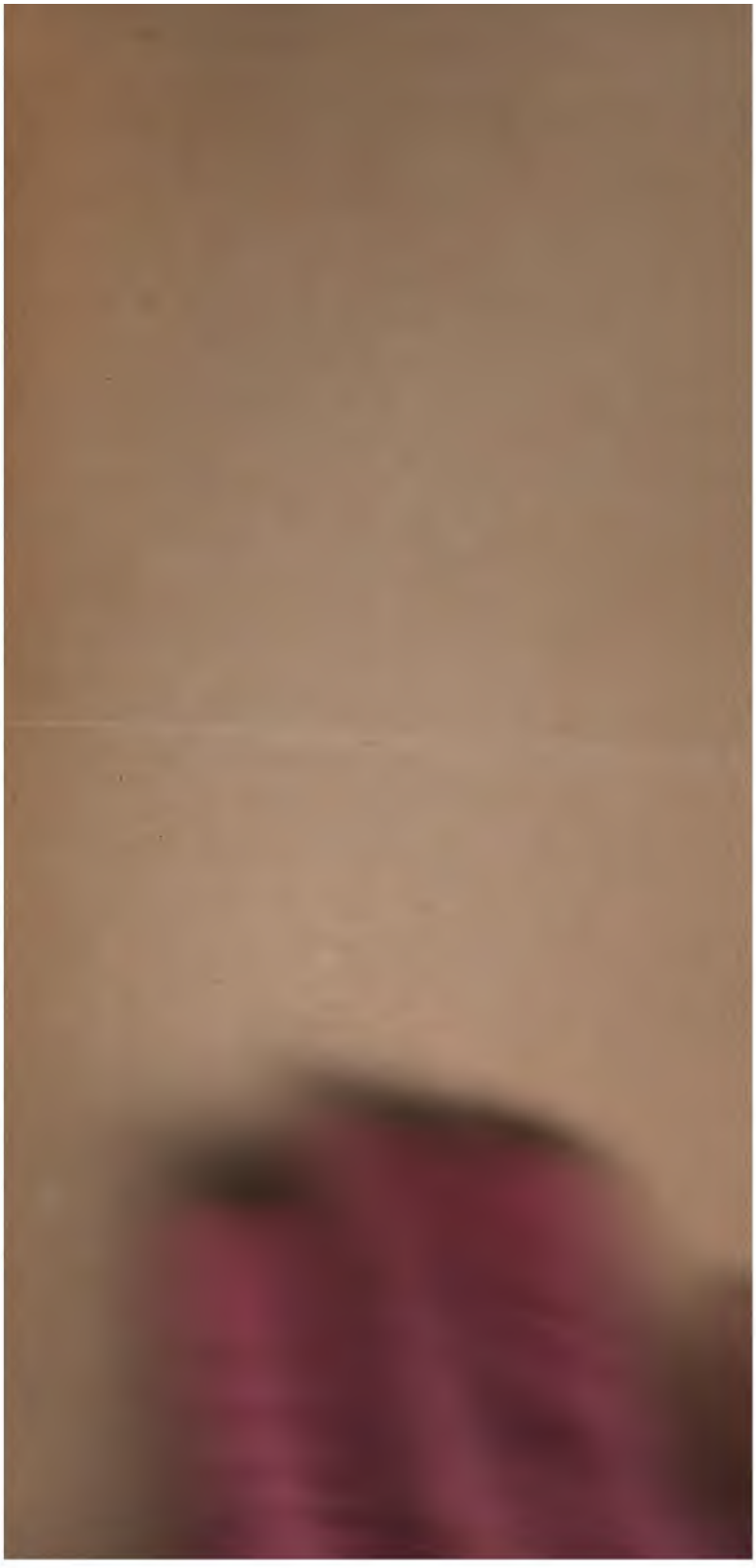
"We charge you, Master Shakspeare, with high treason!" exclaimed Queen Elizabeth, when he presented himself according to her bidding, whereupon he began to be somewhat alarmed, and others nigh unto the presence were exceeding curious to know what he had done to bring upon himself so weighty an accusation.

"Please your majesty, I"—

"The offence hath been proved to us," said the queen, interrupting of him very quickly, and then the courtiers looked marvellous serious. "You have drawn away divers of the subjects of this realm from their duty to their lawful sovereign, which is treason of the very greatest magnitude. Is it not so, Master Bacon?" inquired Queen Elizabeth, seeing that excellent fine lawyer in the circle before her.

"Please your majesty, there can be no doubt of it," replied he with a smile, for he saw into her majesty's humor—though few of the others were so quick witted.

"You have by sundry sorts of jests and other pointed weapons," continued the queen, "very dangerous when not in discreet and lawful hands, excited numberless of our nobles, and officers, besides others of lower quality, into violent disturbances against the peace of the realm. We charge you on your allegiance, confess what hath led you into this notorious misbehaving." As soon as they heard this speech, the courtiers seemed struck with a wonderful admiration of her majesty's conceit, and with very different



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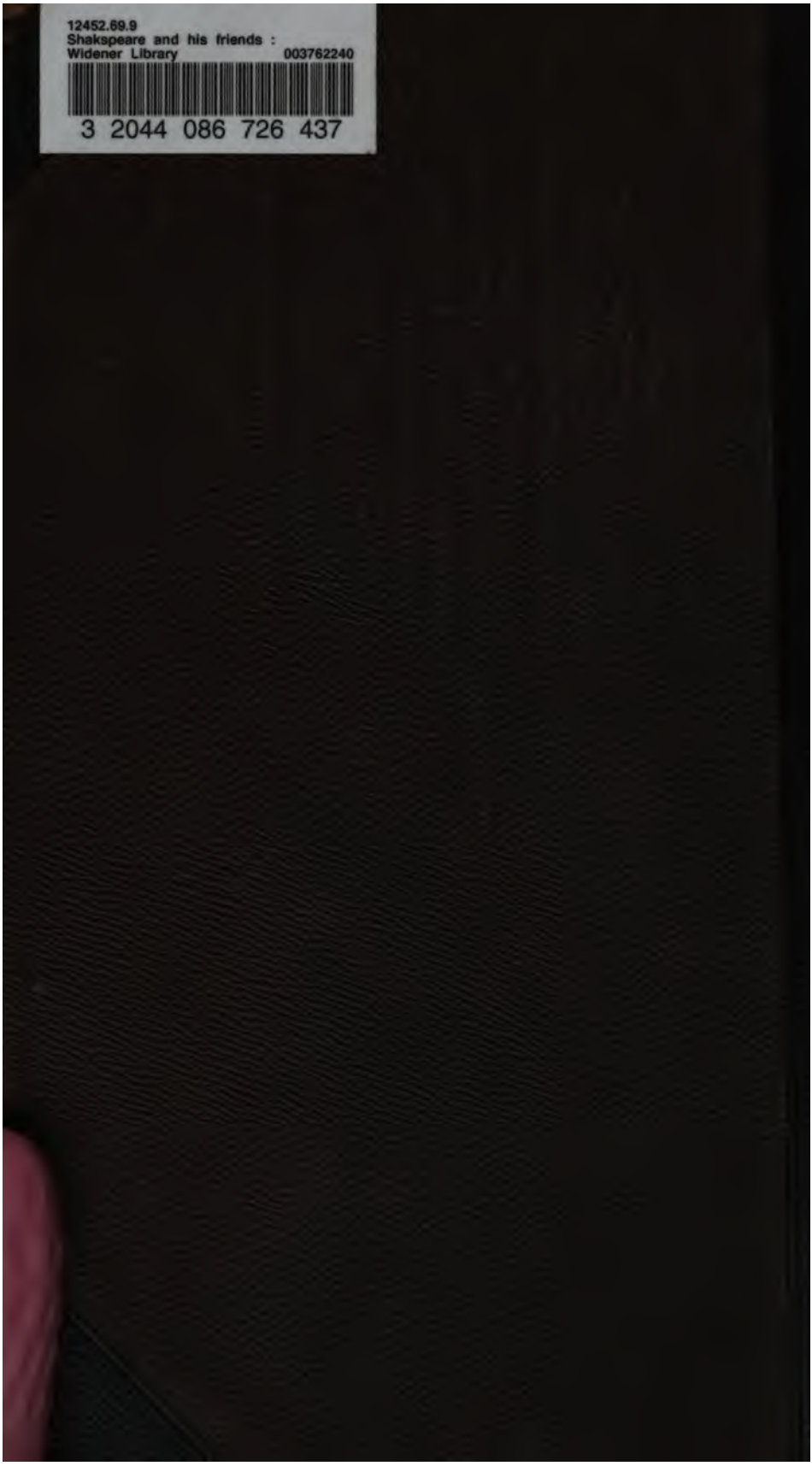
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